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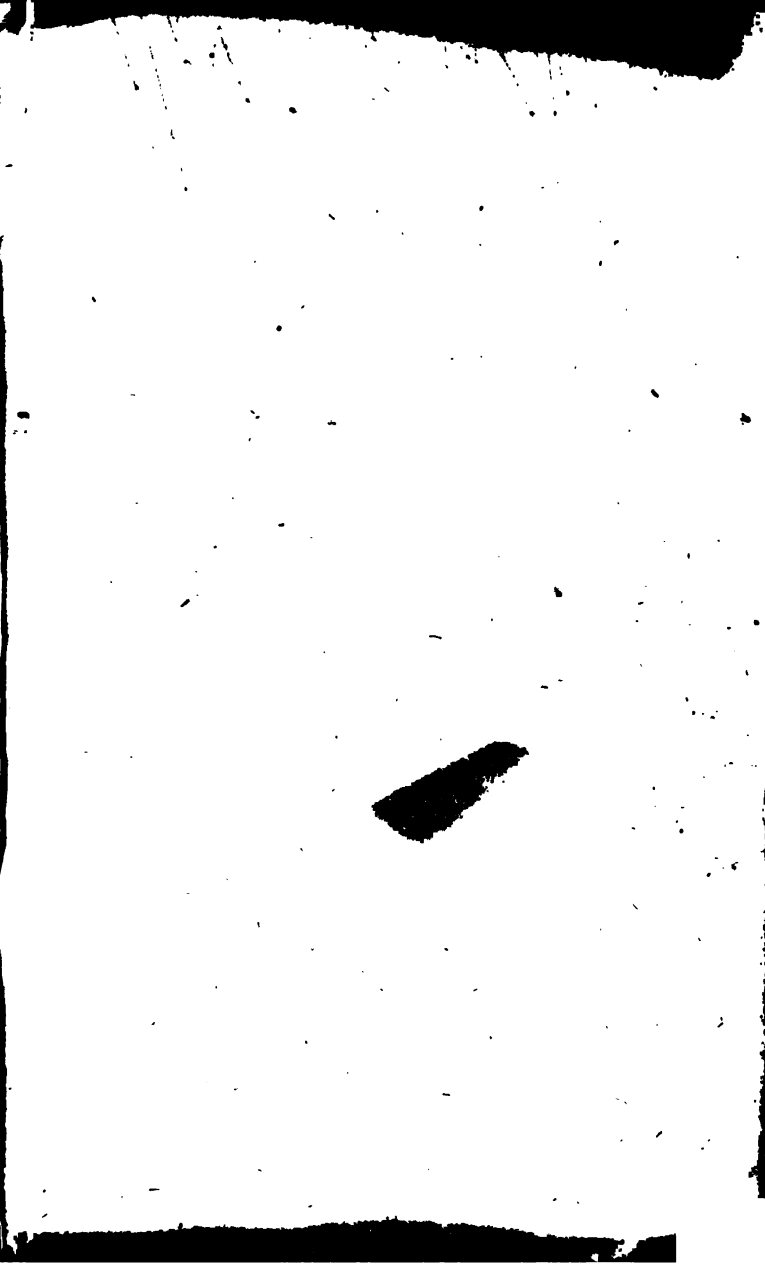
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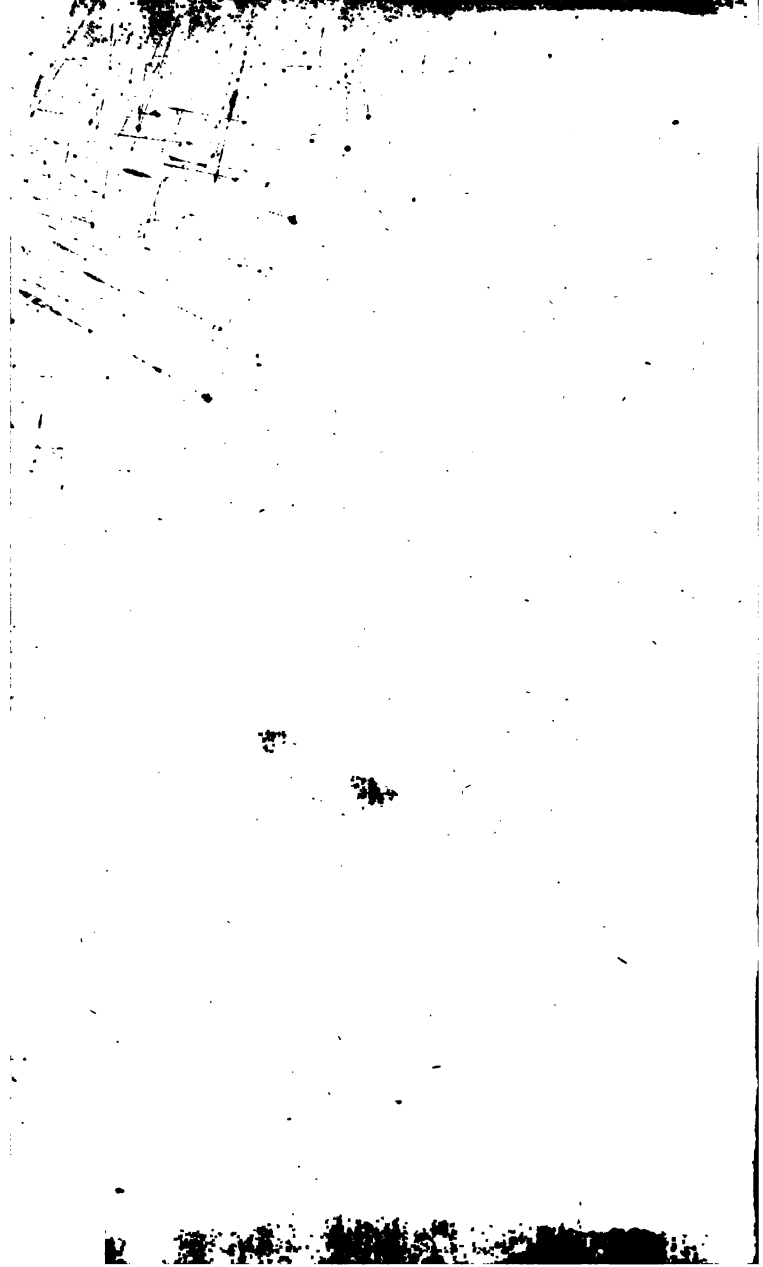
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Eliza Giffard - Verquis Flintshire  
1807

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PLAIN AND PRACTICAL  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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*By the Rev. S. GLASSE, D.D.*

RECTOR OF WANSTEAD, ESSEX, AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY  
TO HIS MAJESTY.

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1801.



TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

*LLOYD*

LORD KENYON,

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF  
KING'S BENCH,

*&c. &c. &c. &c.*

THE FOLLOWING WORK,

IN WHICH THOSE DIVINE LAWS ARE CONSIDERED,

WHICH ARE THE RULE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S CONDUCT,

BOTH AS A CHRISTIAN AND A JUDGE,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S

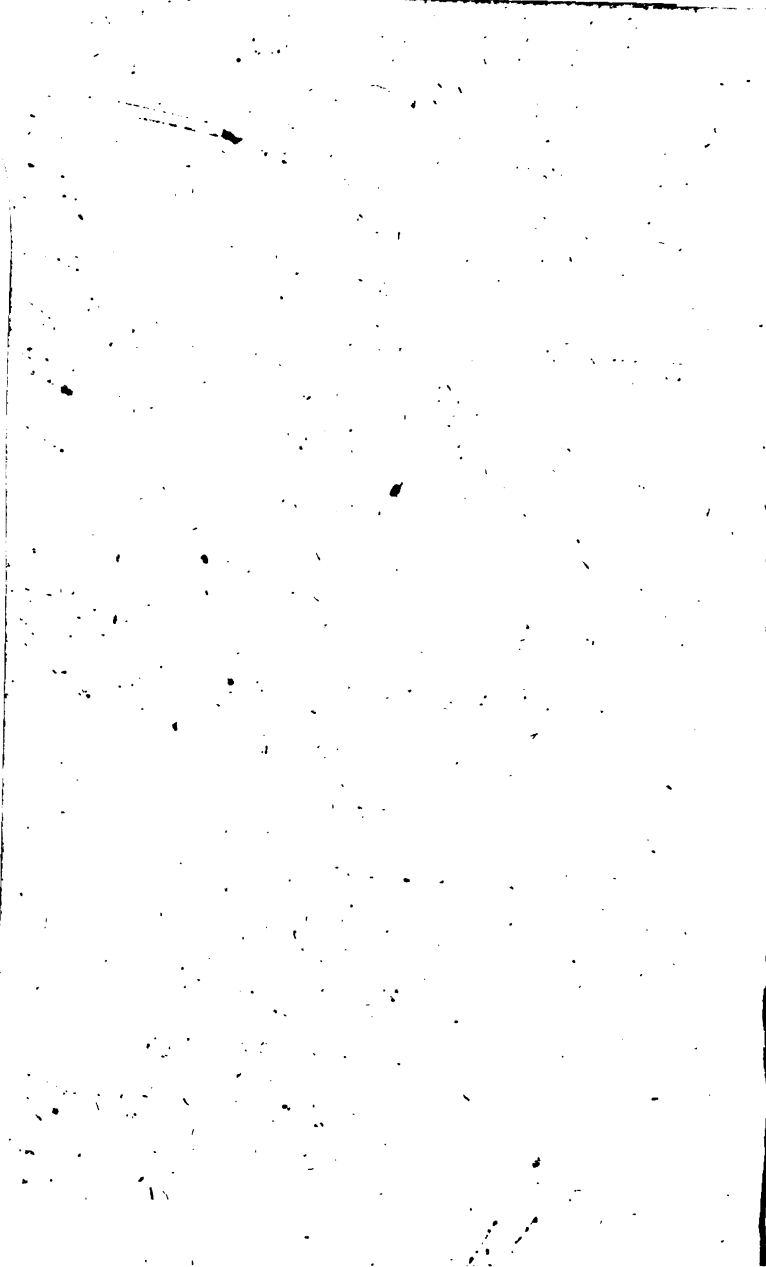
MOST OBLIGED,

AND MOST DEVOTED,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

SAMUEL GLASSE.





ST. MATTHEW xix. 17.

*If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the  
Commandments.*

## INTRODUCTION.

*My Christian Brethren,*

**B**EING desirous of giving you a plain exposition of the Ten Commandments, it will be necessary for me, first, to say a few words on the relation in which we stand to that Divine Being, who disdains not to be called OUR FATHER, and who is pleased to consider us as his children. You are supposed to be not unacquainted with the nature of that Covenant, into which we all entered at our Baptism; a Covenant of Grace and Mercy on the part of God, and a Covenant of Faith and Obedience on the part of man: God on his part promiseth, by virtue of this Covenant, eternal glory in his heavenly kingdom to all his faithful servants. Man, on his part, engages to lead a life of holiness and

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obedience

obedience to the Will of GOD; looking for Salvation and everlasting Life, through the merits and for the sake of Him, who died to purchase it for all mankind, even the LORD Jesus Christ.

The foundation of obedience is a true faith: he that cometh to GOD, with purposes of obedience, must first believe that HE IS, and then that He is a "Rewarder of them that diligently seek him." 'Till you are thoroughly established in this first principle of religion, it will be to no purpose for me to lay before you the several particulars of your duty. It will be necessary for you first to know that, which, without being taught, you would never have inferred through any powers or reasonings of your own minds, viz. That you are created and sent into the world by the Almighty Father of the Universe, to learn his Will, and to perform it. And for your encouragement, you will remember, that *GOD is no respecter of persons; but that in every nation, and in every condition of life, he that worketh righteousness, whether he be high or low, whether he be rich or poor, whether he be bond or free, is accepted with him.* By working righteousness you are to understand, keeping GOD's Commandments; all which are, in their nature and tendency, calculated to make

us

us holy and virtuous, religious and happy ; calculated to enable us to pass through the various scenes of this life with ease and comfort, with credit and satisfaction ; and to fit us for that eternal state which is reserved to be the portion and inheritance of the Saints of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. These Commandments I intend, with God's assistance, to explain to you in the best manner that I can, that your faith may produce abundant fruits of holiness, to the glory of God, and your own present comfort and eternal benefit.

But first, perhaps, you will expect to hear from me, how it comes to pass, that these Commandments which God delivered to *Moses* on *Mount Sinai* for the direction and benefit of the Jews, are made the rule of the *Christian's* conduct : and perhaps, also, you may wish to ask, " Is not the Jewish Law, with its Statutes, and its Ordinances, set aside by the Gospel ? Have we not *new* Precepts, *new* Motives, *new* Laws and Ordinances, without the necessity of going back to Jewish Institutions and Jewish Laws ? " You ought to be fully satisfied upon this point ; otherwise you would not be sincere, when, on hearing these Commandments repeated in the course of the Service, you humbly pray God to have mercy upon you for all your

former breaches of these Laws, and to write them in your hearts, and incline you better to observe them for the time to come.

Know then, that it was no part of our Saviour's business upon earth, when he appeared to be the Instructor, as well as the Saviour and Redeemer, of Mankind, to set up a new System of Religion, of a contrary tendency to the old: that it was no part of his design to set aside any of the *moral* Precepts of the Jewish Law: He expressly cautions his Disciples against such a supposition: "Think not," says he, "that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Think not that I am come to take off from you the obligations, which the Commandments delivered on *Mount Sinai* have laid upon you, to love, honour, and serve God, and to do good to your neighbour, to regulate your affections, and purify your hearts. No: I came rather to enforce these duties in a stronger manner, and to add new obligations and fresh motives to obedience. Here you find it necessary to make a proper distinction between the *ceremonial* and the *moral* parts of the Jewish Law; the *former* of which were only to continue for a time, and were always intended to yield to the introduction of the rites  
of

of the Gospel; whereas the *latter*, being such as affect our religious and moral conduct, such as tend to promote the glory of God, the honour of religion, and our own and others' present and eternal happiness, are of perpetual and indispensable obligation. They flow from the same Fountain of Infinite Wisdom, and Holiness, and Purity; their tendency is to improve our piety, to exalt our reverence of the Deity, to increase our veneration for his Name, his Service, his Sabbath, and all things that belong to him.

They are most wisely calculated to keep us steadfast in the discharge of those relative duties which we owe to *men*; and on the due performance whereof, the peace of the world, and the comforts of society depend. And lastly, they tend to regulate our affections, to restrain all immoderate desires, and to keep our minds in a constant subjection to the will of God. In a word, they are excellently designed to dispose and enable us to *live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*: and thus are they the sure and undeniable evidence of the truth and sincerity of our faith; which is as clearly discerned by the obedience which it pro-

duces, as the goodness of the tree is discernible by its fruits.

But, from the expression which stands at the head of this Introduction, a false conclusion may possibly be drawn; and you may be led to imagine, that we may reasonably expect to be saved by our own good works; and that our observance of these Commandments will, of itself, be sufficient, independent of every other consideration, to establish our *Claim* to the blessing of eternal life. It seems necessary, therefore, in the beginning of these Instructions, to guard you against so dangerous and fatal an error on this point: the truth you will find to lie at an equal distance from two extremes. For while some ground all their hopes of acceptance before GOD on their supposed attainments in moral virtue; others, with no better authority from Scripture, are not less confident, that a mere belief of certain revealed truths, whereby no fruits of holiness are produced, will insure to them the blessings of heaven. The well-instructed Christian steers safely between these rocks: and neither so depends on his own attainments in virtue, as to forget that *there is no other name under heaven whereby he can be saved. but only the name of our LORD Jesus Christ*; nor so depends

depends on that Name, which is indeed *above every other*, as to forget, that *without* as great a degree of personal *holiness* as the frailty of our nature is capable of, *no man can see the LORD*. It is an uniform obedience to the Commandments of GOD, springing from a true faith in the revelations of his word, which alone can afford us a well-grounded hope of mercy in that hour, wherein GOD, for Christ's sake, will receive every faithful servant of his to his favour, and to his presence in the Kingdom of Glory. These Commandments I shall endeavour, through GOD's blessing, as opportunity shall be given me, briefly, plainly, and familiarly to insist upon, for your edification and instruction; and I hope that you will think it your duty to be constantly attendant, that you may, without interruption, proceed with me in the consideration of the several particulars which I shall be led to treat of; and may be regularly trained to the knowledge, (and, may GOD of his mercy grant, to the practice also) of your duty. For all knowledge, without practice, is vain; all faith, without obedience, is vain; whilst all obedience, without faith, is without its proper principle, and cannot look for the divine acceptance. It is the union of these which constitutes that truly religious virtue, which a GOD



of infinite holiness will not disdain to accept, when presented in the name, and offered through the merits, of his Blessed Son. These precepts the Son of GOD came down from heaven most explicitly to reveal and make known to the sons of men; they are the foundation of the religion which He taught; and to one or other of them may be referred every instruction which He delivered; so perfectly do the two dispensations of the Law and the Gospel harmonize and agree with each other, and so true is that doctrine which our Church inculcates, that the Old Testament is not contrary to the New, but that the latter is a full confirmation of the former; and only serves to shew, that both are the offspring of heaven, proceeding from the Author of "every good and every perfect gift;" in whom is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" but who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," the Creator and Preserver, the Saviour and Redeemer, the Sanctifier and Comforter of his Church, and of every faithful Member of it, now and for evermore. Amen.

## EXODUS xx. 3.

*Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me.*

**G**OD hath at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoken to the world: to Moses, on Mount Sinai, the delivery of his Law was accompanied with awful demonstrations of his power, with thundering and lightnings, and with every circumstance of terror: far different is the manner in which, in these last days, he hath spoken to us by his Son; who, being in the form of GOD, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with GOD, condescended to be made in the likeness of men; that in his state of humiliation he might first instruct us in the way of righteousness; and when the fulness of the time was come, might pour out his soul unto death, to make a full and perfect atonement and satisfaction for our sins. The subject of his divine instructions, I observed to you, when I last addressed you, was in no respect contradictory to, but rather a confirmation of, the Laws and Precepts, which the LORD delivered to Moses

on Mount Sinai: accordingly, when this question was proposed to our Saviour, "Master, which is the First Commandment of the Law?" he answers, in a direct conformity to the Precept of Moses in the text, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD thy GOD is one LORD; and thou shalt love the LORD thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." This is the first and great Commandment; and it is a full explanation of the words which we are now considering; and which, when they require us to have none other God than the one LORD, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, require us at the same time to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with an entire and perfect love; so as to be able to say, in perfect sincerity, with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee." To *have*, is to acknowledge, to trust in, the LORD of Heaven and Earth as our only God, the Author and Giver, the Preserver and Support of our life. The rich and ever-flowing Fountain of all the blessings which we receive in this world, and the sure foundation of all our hopes of happiness and glory in the world to come. Blessed is the  
 people

people who, in this sense of the word, have the LORD for their GOD. Trusting in Him alone for pardon and peace, for grace and glory; loving him above all things, as the sum of all perfection, as well as the first cause of all good to his creatures. In the Holy Scriptures, that whereon our first affections are placed, is considered as our God, and they who make any inferior possession or pursuit the object of their principal regard, do certainly violate this First Commandment. The covetous man, whose heart and mind are occupied by the desire of riches; the ambitious man, who is continually grasping at dignities and honours; the man of pleasure, (as he is falsely called) who is constantly engaged in the pursuit of sensual gratifications, every one of these has chosen a worthless object for his affections, and acts in defiance of the precept before us. The God of this world hath blinded their eyes, that they cannot see the glorious privilege, the unspeakable happiness, which is the portion of them that have the LORD for their GOD. The first of these is expressly called an idolater, and the others are considered as vainly seeking for happiness where it is not to be found, instead of having recourse to that wellspring of comfort and delight, even

flowing in plenteous streams from the author of every blessing. At your Baptism you were made the children of God, you were admitted into the family of Christ; but being incapable of entering into a covenant with God in your own persons, there were found certain charitable persons, who engaged for you, that as you grew up to such an age, as to be made sensible of your duty and obligations, you should be taught to make for yourselves a deliberate choice of the LORD for your God: this choice many of you have ratified in your own names in the rite of Confirmation; when the duty of your baptismal sureties ceased, and you became professors of the gospel of Christ on your own account, and immediately responsible to God for your adherence to Him all the remainder of your lives. And yet farther hath this covenant been renewed by such of you as have, in conformity to your Saviour's last command, presented yourselves before his altar; there to remember the wonders of his love, and to receive fresh supplies of his grace, whereby you might be enabled to serve him in righteousness and true holiness all your days.

You see then by how many obligations you are bound to cleave stedfastly unto God, to believe in, to trust in, to fear, to serve, and to love

love Him only; that is, so infinitely above all other things to love him, as to be ready to sacrifice every thing that is most dear to you, rather than to forsake, reject, deny, or in any instance to renounce the LORD your GOD.

Few arguments will be necessary to enforce this duty, if you call to your remembrance the relation in which you stand with respect to that adorable Being, whom above all things you are required to love, honour, and obey.

1st. He is your Creator; you are the work of his hands; who in the beginning breathed into the nostrils of his creature, man, the breath of life, and man became a living soul; you are also endued with a reasonable and immortal spirit; you are made capable of knowing, of loving, and of serving GOD.

2dly. He is your continual Preserver; in him you live, and move, and have your being; he watches over you continually with parental care; he is about your bed; and about your paths, and spieth out all your ways; a circumstance, which ought to fill your minds with an awful regard to your conduct in the whole course of your lives. For be assured, "that there is no darkness or shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" from HIM, whose  
 eyes

eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of the sons of men.

3dly. He is your Redeemer; he hath purchased you, when ye were sold under sin, captives to Satan, and enemies to GOD; *ye are not your own*, but ye are his people, his children, his servants, whom he hath *bought with a price*, even with the price of his own blood; and the argument drawn from this consideration by the Apostle, applies itself with peculiar force:---  
 “ Therefore, glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD’s.”

4thly. He is your Sanctifier. GOD the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, is united with the Father and the Son in the creation, preservation, and salvation of mankind; He it is that *worketh in us to will and to do* what is acceptable in the sight of GOD; He it is from whom every good thought, every religious disposition, every word and action originates, which may tend to promote the glory of GOD, or the benefit of ourselves and others: we are by nature corrupt; He purifieth our corruptions: we are by nature weak and frail, prone to error and continual deviation from the straight path of our duty; He it is that giveth us strength and wisdom, to guide and establish our goings in  
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the way which leads to heaven and happiness: without Him we are and can do nothing; but we can do all things that are required of us, if we are strengthened, assisted, and supported by Him.

This is that Great, Almighty, and Adorable Being, existing in Three Divine Persons, co-equally and co-essentially GOD, whom alone we are here commanded to acknowledge and obey; devoting our whole heart and mind and affections to Him, unto whom we are indebted for all that we enjoy in this life, or look for in a better. We are not to divide our love betwixt GOD and the world, its riches, its honours, or its pleasures; for that is, to endeavour to reconcile what is in its nature impossible and incompatible, the service of GOD and Mammon! He, to whom we ourselves and all things which are most valuable and dear to us belong, has the most reasonable claim to our entire and undivided affection; he is a jealous GOD, and will not admit of a rival, where he has an indisputable claim to the whole that we can offer him.

Examine yourselves therefore frequently and seriously upon this point; whether you so love the LORD your GOD, as not to dedicate the best affections of your mind to any inferior and unworthy

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thy object ;—whether in all your difficulties your trust is in Him ;—whether He above all things is the subject of your fear and reverence, your love and admiration ;—whether your thoughts are principally directed towards Him, and towards the attainment of those heavenly glories, which He hath promised, purchased, and prepared for his faithful servants ?

Be assured there is no ground of comfort and satisfaction equal to that, which arises from a stedfast persuasion, that the LORD Jehovah is your God ; that the Great Creator and Governor of the Universe is your Protector and your Friend ; that, through the merits, and for the sake of his Blessed Son, he is a reconciled Father to sinful mankind. That, by his power he preserves ; by his wisdom he directs ; by his mercy he supports ; by his grace he sanctifies those that trust in Him, that fear and love him, submissive to his will, and obedient to his commands. Be ye sure, then, that the LORD He is God ; it is He that hath made us ; it is He that hath delivered our souls from death ; it is He that preserveth our feet from falling, by those constant supplies of supernatural assistance, which are always within the reach of devout prayer. To Him therefore, and to Him alone, let the  
words.

words of your mouths, the meditations of your hearts, the actions of your lives, and all the powers and faculties of your souls be directed; that so your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, world without end. Amen.

**ST. MATTHEW, iv. 10.**

*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*

THIS is the substance of the Second Commandment, and it is as nearly connected with the first, as the service of the lips is or ought to be connected with the affections of the heart. We need not many admonitions to serve Him whom our soul loveth: attention, reverence, and outward respect, are the necessary result of grateful attachment to the object of our affection: when

we review the obligations under which we lie to the Supreme Author of every blessing in time and eternity, what question is so natural for us to ask as this? "What reward shall I give unto the LORD for all the benefits which He hath bestowed upon me?" And what answer is so well adapted to our situation as that which the Psalmist instantly subjoins?—"I will receive the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the Name of the LORD: I will demonstrate my reverential love and gratitude, by devoting myself to his service, by hastening to his courts with thanksgiving, and entering into his gates with praise."—This Commandment, in forbidding the worship of any creature, necessarily directs our religious services to their only proper object, the Sovereign LORD of Heaven and earth. It is a very striking token of the weakness and corruption of human nature, that ever such a prohibition should have been necessary; that any rational creature should be capable of transferring his religious services from the Author of his Being and his well-Being, the Great Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of the World, to a despicable graven image, the work of men's hands; which hath eyes, yet seeth not; which hath ears, yet heareth not;

not; which hath feet, yet moveth not; neither is any breath in its mouth. O! miserable delusion of fallen man! How shall we account for the prevalence and encouragement of a practice irreconcilable with reason or common sense! The folly of idolatrous worship hath engaged the severest satire of the inspired and apocryphal writers; and though I have no reason to suspect that any of my present hearers are likely to be seduced into the errors of such as worship the creature rather than the Creator, yet it may not be amiss, in order to confirm them in the right way, and to increase their thankfulness to Him, who hath placed them in it, to set before them the absurdity of that worship, the object of which is any other than God Himself, as described and enlarged upon by those writers. My quotation will necessarily be of considerable length; but it will serve more fully to expose the vanity of idol-makers and idol-worshippers, than any thing which I could of myself deliver on the subject. Hear ye then the Prophet, after a full vindication of the almighty power and eternity of God:—"They  
 " that make a graven image, are all of them  
 " vanity, and their delectable things shall not  
 " profit, and they are their own witnesses; they  
 " see

“ see not, nor know, that they may be ashamed.  
 “ Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven  
 “ image that is profitable for nothing? Behold,  
 “ all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the work-  
 “ men, they are of men: Let them all be ga-  
 “ thered together, let them stand up; yet they  
 “ shall fear, and be ashamed together; The  
 “ smith with the tongs both worketh in the  
 “ coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and  
 “ worketh it with the strength of his arms: Yea,  
 “ he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he  
 “ drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpen-  
 “ ter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out  
 “ with a line: He fitteth it with planes, and he  
 “ marketh it out with a compass, and maketh  
 “ it after the figure of a man, according to the  
 “ beauty of a man; that it may remain in the  
 “ house. He heweth him down cedars, and  
 “ taketh the cypress and the oak; which he  
 “ strengtheneth for himself among the trees of  
 “ the forest;” or, which he hath cultivated and  
 suffered to increase for this unreasonable pur-  
 pose: “ He planteth an ash, and the rain doth  
 “ nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to  
 “ burn: For he will take thereof and warm  
 “ himself: Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh  
 “ bread: Yea, he maketh a god, and worship-  
 “ peth

“ peth it : He maketh it a graven image, and  
 “ falleth down thereto : He burneth part thereof  
 “ in the fire ; with part thereof he eateth flesh :  
 “ He roasteth roast and is satisfied : Yea, he  
 “ warmeth himself, and saith, Aha ! I am warm,  
 “ I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof  
 “ he maketh a god, even his graven image. He  
 “ falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it ;  
 “ and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me,  
 “ for thou art my God. They have not known,  
 “ nor understood ; for he hath shut their eyes,  
 “ that they cannot see ; and their hearts, that  
 “ they cannot understand. And none confi-  
 “ dereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge  
 “ nor understanding to say, I have burnt part of  
 “ it in the fire : Yea, also I have baked bread  
 “ upon the coals thereof : I have roasted flesh  
 “ and eaten it ; and shall I make the residue  
 “ thereof an abomination ? Shall I fall down to  
 “ the stock of a tree ? He feedeth of ashes : A  
 “ deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he  
 “ cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not  
 “ a lie in my right hand ? ” — I have given you  
 this quotation at full length, because it is much  
 too little to say of it, that it exposes the ab-  
 surdity and folly of idolatry, to say nothing of  
 its impiety, in terms far more forcible than  
 any.

any which I could use on the subject. A thorough consideration of this passage must needs fill the violators of this Second Commandment with shame for their offence against the common dictates of reason, as well as with sorrow, for having robbed the Divine Majesty of his glory and his worship, and substituted an empty, useless, despicable idol in His stead. Some better plea, perhaps, yet wholly unjustifiable, do they offer for their breach of this divine law, who consider the mother of our Blessed LORD as a suitable object of divine worship. That she is ever to be regarded as the instrument in GOD'S hand of the greatest possible blessing to mankind, is readily allowed: and we do most heartily fulfil her prediction concerning herself, that "all generations should call her "blessed." But we know no human creature in the character of a Being whom it is our duty to adore. The Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, One very and eternal GOD, is the only object of our religious services: to Him alone we look up; to Him alone we address ourselves as the Author of our being and well being; of our creation, and preservation; of our redemption from the punishment, and our deliverance from

from the power of sin; for all our hopes of security from danger, of pardon and peace, of grace in this world, and of glory in a better. We seek no other mediation betwixt God and us, than that of *the Man Christ Jesus*, exalted to his mediatorial kingdom, and seated at the right hand of the Father, and *ever living to make intercession for us*: much less do we worship the purest angel, or heavenly spirit, who, like ourselves, is a servant of God, appointed, in some invisible but gracious manner, to *minister* to such as shall be *heirs of salvation*; An intermediate link in the chain of communication between heaven and earth, but only commissioned to be an instrument of the divine mercy or of judgment to the children of men.

But as there is a *negative* obligation in this Commandment, so there is a *positive* duty most strongly implied in it; and when we are forbidden to worship that which is no god, we are required to worship the true God in a devout and acceptable manner. God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. He is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and unto Him, with whom we have immediate intercourse in our prayers, all things are naked and open: He, we may



may be assured, will not fail to distinguish between the vain effusions of hypocrisy, the careless mockery of negligence, the idle vanities of superstition, the irrational dictates of enthusiasm, and the decent, sober, temperate, and devout expressions of undissembled piety. We are never to forget, as the best security of our due observance of this Commandment, the Almighty's declaration concerning himself: " I the LORD thy God am a jealous God;" jealous of the honour due to my name and my adorable attributes; jealous of every insult offered to my divine supremacy, as the Creator and Sovereign of the World; avenging the impiety of them that hate me, even to the \* third and fourth generation, but shewing mercy even unto thousands of them that love me, and that demonstrate their love of me, by keeping my Commandments. Let me intreat you to attend to the Almighty's declaration concerning himself in these words; and whilst you consider the awful severity of his threats, you will at the same time admire the superior graces of his

\* Might not the words על שלשים ועל רבעים be rendered *unto thirty and unto forty*; and would not this construction of the words form a proper *Antithesis* to the word לאלפים, *to thousands*? The word *generation*, no scholar needs to be informed, is not in the original text.

mercy

mercy and loving kindness; and may it be the desire of your hearts, and the constant endeavour of your lives to escape the former, and be made partakers of the latter. To this end, O worship the LORD in the beauty of Holiness; adore his mercy, and stand in awe of his judgments; bow not your knee to a senseless idol; nor bow the knee of your hearts to any of those creatures, which are but too apt to excite in us an idolatrous affection; to the exclusion of our Creator, who is GOD over all, blessed for evermore. You will observe, that he who bestows the best affections of his heart, the most strenuous endeavours of his life, and the most valuable portions of his time and exertions on anything short of GOD, and the things above, falls within the censure and the punishment of those who are here described as those that hate GOD, and keep not his Commandments: they have set up idols in their hearts, and cannot worship the true GOD with that simplicity and godly sincerity, which alone can render their services acceptable in his sight. As, in our explanation of the former Commandment, we shewed, that a divided heart was not such a sacrifice as GOD will accept; so neither will He accept a divided service: chuse ye therefore, or rather remember, that at your baptism the choice was made,

whom ye would serve; ye then devoted yourselves to the service of the LORD Jehovah, and engaged to continue in the same all the days of your life: remember then the vow that is upon you, and faithfully perform what was solemnly undertaken in your name, and of which many of you are of an age thoroughly to comprehend the nature and importance; and, renouncing all objects that are unworthy of your first regard, whether in your general pursuits, or in your religious performances, let this be not only the language of your lips, but the fullest conviction of your hearts, that the LORD He is the God, the LORD He is the God. To whom Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three Persons, and One God, be all honour, glory, and praise, world without end. Amen.

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### EXODUS xx. 7.

*Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his Name in vain.*

TO take the Name of God in vain, I hardly need observe to you, is to make an indecent, improper,

improper, or profane use of it; whether in your ordinary conversation, or more solemnly in a Court of Justice; where the introduction of that awful Name, which "is above every name that can be named in heaven, or on earth," for the confirmation of a falsehood, is justly considered as the highest degree of violation of this Divine Law, the boldest act of defiance of the Majesty of Heaven. This is the general interpretation of this Third Commandment; and the terms in which the sentence of God against it is pronounced, though less severe than they might have been, are yet sufficiently awful and discouraging, to deter any considerate person from being guilty of this great offence; an offence not less against the decencies of society, than against the will and command of Him that hath forbidden it; an offence against every dictate of reason and common sense; an offence which is so far from obtaining credit, that it utterly destroys every favourable opinion of the veracity of the speaker. I observed, that the Almighty's threat was sufficient to discourage every *considerate* person from persisting in a violation of this Command; but the misfortune is, that such as ~~allow~~ themselves in this sin are peculiarly *inconsiderate*; and to this is to be principally imputed the prevalence of a vice which has so very

little to urge in its own behalf. The grossest transgressor of this part of the Divine Law, I mean the wilfully-perjured person, who dares to call on the sacred Name of God, as a witness to a known falsehood, in a Court of Justice; such an one, I admit, may plead, that he was tempted to this crime, either to shelter himself or others from the punishment, which he or they were in danger of incurring for some other offence, or to obtain some dear-bought advantage, not otherwise to be obtained: and, since the discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart belongeth only to God, such arts and deceit may often succeed, by eluding the discovery of fallible men; but great indeed is the offence in the eyes of Him, who being a God of Truth, and even Truth itself, is called upon to be the witness of a falsehood: He will not hold such guiltless; He will account them the most outrageous transgressors of his laws, and make them feel the effects of that power, which their presumption leads them to defy. But we are to lament the other more frequent violation of this command, of which multitudes are guilty in their ordinary intercourse with one another: let the subject be ever so trifling, the occasion ever so unimportant, the appeal is made to the Majesty of Heaven for  
the

the truth of what is asserted, without the slightest reserve, without the least veneration for that Name, which angels themselves, with the profoundest reverence, adore: When we reflect that of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment; when we are expressly told, that by their words men shall be justified, and that by their words they shall be condemned, we are quite at a loss to conceive, from what source a sin can originate, which has so little to offer in its vindication. Were you seriously to ask of one, whom you heard uttering curses against his neighbour, and either ultimately or directly bringing them down, or apparently wishing to bring them down upon his own head, you would be surprized at the weakness of his arguments, if he should venture to urge any in the way of apology:—"I was angry"—"I was vexed"—"I knew not what I said"—"I was not aware of my guiltiness and folly"—"I did not consider the force and meaning of my words"—or rather, "I meant nothing at all."—Nay but, O man! remember, that thou art both a rational and an accountable creature; therefore accountable, because endued with reason, and a power of discernment betwixt good and evil, betwixt wisdom and folly, betwixt

lience to the will of God and a wilful defiance  
 is Majesty, Power, and Authority : and still  
 er accountable, as being blest with divine  
 : for the regulation of thy conduct ; with  
 Holy Scriptures for thy direction in every  
 icular of thy duty ; with the fullest revela-  
 concerning the nature and attributes of that  
 ighty Being, whom thou ventürest, with  
 presumptuous confidence, to affront and  
 ise. If inconsideration be admitted as a bar  
 he sentence against ungodliness, then is the  
 er admitted to plead in his excuse the neglect  
 God's best and most valuable gift, whereby  
 raised and distinguished above every other  
 of the creation. But such a plea will not,  
 feared, be admitted at that Tribunal, where  
 y one will be made responsible for the right  
 of such talents and endowments as he has  
 ved ; and where no man will be excused  
 n offence, which a right use of his reason  
 d have prevented him from committing. I  
 a right use of his reason, independent on  
 bedience to the positive dictates of divine  
 ation : " I say unto you," saith the Great  
 ictor, as well as Redeemer of Mankind,  
 ear not at all." And his apostle, " Above  
 things, my brethren, swear not ; but let  
 your

“ your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye  
 “ fall into condemnation.” Thus doth the  
 Word of God, in addition to the dictates of  
 common sense, condemn this sin as equally im-  
 pious and irrational: you find it frequently com-  
 mitted, even where the object against whom the  
 curses are uttered is altogether insensible of the  
 imprecation, and incapable of suffering what is  
 so foolishly denounced against it: how lost then to  
 all sense of propriety, as well as of decency, are the  
 wilful transgressors of this divine Commandment!

But is there not another way, wherein this  
 part of the law of God may be violated, with-  
 out running into those foolish extravagances,  
 or that most serious defiance of the power  
 and wrath of Almighty God, which we have  
 already noticed? Surely *they* may be said to  
*take the Name of the LORD their God in vain,*  
 who having been baptized in his Name, and  
 adopted into his family, and having solemnly  
 avowed themselves his children and his servants,  
 do afterwards live in direct disobedience to his  
 laws, and in wilful contempt of his authority.  
 The precept of the apostle addresseth itself to  
 every Christian, without exception, when he  
 directs, that “ every one that nameth the Name  
 of Christ should depart from iniquity;” other-



wise the question applies itself with peculiar force,  
 “ Why call ye me, LORD, LORD, and do not  
 “ the things which I say? Why do you profess  
 “ yourselves the disciples of Christ, when your  
 “ conduct declares you to be altogether unin-  
 “ fluenced by his precepts, and unedified by his  
 “ all-perfect example? Why in words do ye ac-  
 “ knowledge and confess, that the LORD is your  
 “ God, whilst in works ye deny him?” This is  
 a very serious transgression of the Command-  
 ment before us, which highly deserves, but, I  
 believe, seldom enters into, our consideration;  
 yet, if we would vindicate ourselves from the  
 charge of *inconsistency* as well as *irreligion*, it is  
 our duty to render our practice conformable to  
 our profession; and, through the help of divine  
 grace, to become as well in reality, as in name,  
 the disciples and followers, the servants and chil-  
 dren of Jesus Christ.

Having pointed out to you in what instances  
 this Commandment is broken, it is necessary that  
 I should set before you the means, whereby you  
 may best be secured from the commission of a  
 crime, so offensive to God and to society, as that  
 which we are now considering:—

I it, then, let me earnestly recommend it to  
 you seriously to consider the weakness of those  
 excuses

excuses which are offered by such as allow themselves to be guilty of this horrible sin of profaneness. They say, they have contracted a habit of doing it; and they scarcely know when they offend; but does the frequency of any sin lessen, does it not rather increase, its guilt? Even now, then, from this moment, it is high time, that such an evil custom should be broken off.— Others say, that they trust it will be excused, as the effect of passion; but, besides that it is our duty to controul and govern our passions, is it not most unreasonable that we should resent an injury from man, by flying in the face of God? Will any man venture to stab his own father, to revenge an injury received from another hand? Just as reasonable is it to affront your Creator, because your fellow-creature has offended you. But perhaps 'tis fashionable, and 'tis manly, to shew that you have courage enough to brave the almighty power of God. O! run not with the multitude to do evil; and think it no mark of courage, that you do not fear Him, “who hath power to cast both your body and soul into hell.” Lastly, you may urge, perhaps, intemperance for your excuse, that you thus offend, when reason is off her guard. But why is she off her guard? And why is intemperance brought as an excuse,

when it is itself an aggravation of the crime? Such an excuse will little avail before an earthly tribunal; still less will it be accepted before the allrighteous judgment-seat of Christ.

2d. But your most effectual security against the violation of this command, is an awful sense of God's continual presence with you. Settle this firmly in your own mind, that there is not a word proceeding from your lips, a thought encouraged in your heart, or an action produced in your life and conduct, of which He is not now the witness, who will one day be the Judge. Under the Jewish dispensation, He ordained, that whosoever blasphemed the name of the Lord should be put to death; and under the Christian dispensation, the Commandment is express:—**SWEAR NOT AT ALL.** And we are assured, that the Name which is so freely, so carelessly, so profanely taken into our mouths, is above every other entitled to the most profound respect and the most awful veneration of men on earth and of angels in heaven.

“ Let your conversation then be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ;” and in that comprehensive word we include not only your common discourse, but the general turn and tenor of your life and actions. Set God always before you, not merely as an object of terror, but as an object  
of

of profoundest reverence ; and dare not to think, or speak, or act otherwise than becometh the children of your Heavenly Father ; that when the Judge of all the earth shall appear, to whom an account of all your thoughts, words, and deeds, is to be rendered, ye may be received into his favour and presence, and may exchange the pure, pious, sober, and discreet conversation of Saints and holy persons, for the hymns and praises, and delightful exercises of the angels in heaven.

Now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be all honour, and glory, and praise, world without end. Amen.

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### EXODUS xx. 8.

*Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.*

THIS precept of the divine law is introduced in such a peculiar manner, as to command a more than ordinary respect. It is intended to excite a proper attention to the Commandment, and

a due sense of the value of that gift, with which the LORD was pleased to bless mankind, in the institution of the sabbath. It is one of his greatest mercies, and He here requires it to be had in constant remembrance; and so remembered, as to be applied to the purposes for which it was set apart by its most gracious Author. We are here commanded to keep it holy; yet not to the exclusion of those works of indispensable necessity, and Christian Charity; which are so far from being violations of this Commandment, that they constitute a truly religious observance of it. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;" a most gracious allowance of six parts in seven of our time for our own purposes, with only a claim of the remaining seventh for the immediate services of religion. Here, however, let me caution you against a dangerous misapprehension of this merciful grant of six days for the ordinary business of our lives, as though all concern for religion on any day except the sabbath were wholly impertinent and unnecessary: On no day is God to be excluded from our thoughts; on no day are our services to be withholden: that day is very ill begun, which is not begun with prayer to God; and that day is as ill-concluded, which ends not with praises for mercies

mercies received, and supplications of pardon for sins committed. Much has been said on the subject of the change of day, whereon the Christian sabbath is celebrated; on this I shall not trouble you, as conceiving it to be a matter of little importance to you. You are born and educated in a country which considers the first day in every week (commonly called Sunday, or the LORD'S Day) as proper to be dedicated to religious services: it is of more importance to you to point out the best method of observing it, that the end of its institution may be most effectually answered. In the first place then, let me observe to you, that the very name by which it is distinguished as the LORD'S Day, is sufficient, one should imagine, to command the reverence of every religious person; surely whatever belongs to the LORD, is entitled to our utmost respect; but it challenges our regard more especially on account of the mercies and benefits commemorated thereon. We celebrate the accomplishment of our redemption by Jesus Christ, effected by his resurrection from the dead, even as the Jews on their sabbath the finishing the works of creation. We celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost on this first day of the week upon the apostles. By the latter of these great events

events we are delivered from the power, and by the former from the punishment of sin. Thus is this holy day recommended to our devout observance, by considerations most proper to excite our grateful veneration : And it was for this particular purpose that the sabbath was given to man, that, amidst the various distracting pursuits in which he finds himself engaged, he may not want, at proper intervals, leisure and opportunity to lift up his *heart* to those regions where his *treasure* ought and is supposed to be, and to that all-gracious and all-glorious Being, by whom the riches of glory, and honour, and immortality are dispensed to the children of men.

The religious observance of certain times and seasons, set apart for the worship of the Supreme Being, has ever been considered as an indispensable duty, even among such as have erred exceedingly concerning the form and manner, and even the object of their worship. It remained only for such, as retain no sense of God or religion in their minds, utterly to reject these outward declarations of their belief in the one; or their respect for the other : and it is not until men are hardened in negligence or unbelief, that they can prevail with themselves to act in defiance of every obligation of gratitude, and the

the most solemn injunction of this Commandment. I have already observed that it is introduced in a manner peculiar to itself:—*Remember* the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. It is because the infinite wisdom of the Divine Law-giver foreknew how apt 'his negligent and disobedient children would be to *forget* their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; how probable it would be, that either the allurements of sinful pleasures, or the distractions of worldly cares, would render them unmindful of their principal and most important duties and concerns.

Sad experience fully convinces us, that He who laid on man this injunction to *remember* Him, and his Commandment, knew the propensities of our sinful nature: For do we not see thousands of our nominal Fellow-Christians as utterly regardless of this day, as if they really lived without God in the world? as if they had no sense of the benefits for which they stand indebted to the divine goodness; as if they had never formed a proper estimate either of the blessings already received, or of the treasures laid up for the righteous in a better world. You, I trust, my Christian Brethren, have not attended to my instructions on this and other religious subjects,



subjects to so little purpose, as not to know, that to *fear God*, and to *keep his Commandments*, is the *whole duty of Man*. And that not one of the Commandments requires a more strict attention, though perhaps none is more trifled with, or neglected, than this before us: for, let only the restraints which the observance of the sabbath lays upon us be taken off, and every disposition to fulfil the will and commands of GOD will gradually follow; the mind will contract a degree of indolence, or hardness, or insensibility, which will prove fatal to our growth in grace and religious virtue. Having, as we conceive, with impunity, affronted GOD, by despising his sabbath, by neglecting his ordinances, and by turning our backs on his service, and preferring every other pursuit before that of religious improvement; the subordinate duties respecting our neighbour cannot be expected to have much influence on our hearts and lives. If we abstain from acts of violence, injustice, or rapacity, it can hardly be supposed that we are restrained by principle, but only discouraged by the fear of temporal punishment; and why we should not dread ten thousand times more the avenging scourge of an offended GOD, I profess myself utterly at a loss to determine. Under the Jewish law, the profane

faner of the sabbath was to be stoned to death ; and even an apparently slight violation of this law actually received that punishment. Under the Christian dispensation, the Commandment is full as express, the obligations full as strong, and the wrath of an insulted Deity as *certain* as heretofore ; as certain indeed, but not as immediate. The punishment assigned to it by human laws hath nothing formidable, perhaps, in it ; certainly nothing adequate to the mischievous nature and malignity of the offence. But is not a day at hand, when the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth shall charge against us every wilful violation of his laws, and those offences in particular, whereby the glory of his name, the welfare of his true religion, and the general happiness of mankind in this life and a better, were presumptuously set at nought ? Flatter not then thyself, vain man, that however thou mayest have escaped the temporal punishment of thy sin, thou shalt escape the all-righteous judgment of God. Think not, that, amidst such a multitude of offenders in the same way, *thou* shalt not be observed. Surely the all-discerning Judge of heaven and earth will not suffer any wilful transgressor of his laws to pass unpunished.

Hoping

Hoping then, that I may have succeeded in my endeavours to convince you that the sabbath day cannot innocently be profaned, I shall dedicate the short remainder of this discourse to the business of directing you *how* to observe it in the best and most profitable manner.

It is acknowledged to be *a day of rest*; but let me intreat you not to mistake idleness for rest. It is therefore *a day of rest* from worldly labour, that the time which is occupied by that on the other days of the week, may on this be devoted to the proper employment of an immortal spirit, an heir of God's eternal kingdom. It is a day of *rest*, that it may be a day of reflection, of self-examination, of serious and innocent conversation, of attendance on the duties of public worship, of more enlarged devotions in private, and with your families; and at the close of it; of holy meditation on all that you have heard, and read, and done. It is a day of *rest*; but miserable are they, who misinterpret *rest*, as leisure for intemperance and sinful indulgence. What hope can such persons entertain of admission into *that rest*, which *remains for the people of God*? Have they not too just cause to fear, that they shall be of the number of those to whom the Almighty hath sworn  
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in his wrath, that *they shall not enter into his rest?* The apostle speaks of some who could not enter in, *because of unbelief.* It will be equally unreasonable for those to look for heavenly rest, who have so abused one of GOD's most precious gifts, as to make his sabbath a day for licentious excesses, instead of a day for the exercises of piety, and the improvement of their souls in grace and holiness.

Considering, then, the LORD's Day as appropriated to His service, resolve to welcome every return of it with thankfulness; pay an early attention to the duties of it; prepare yourselves for the public service by serious and seasonable reflections on the mercies of GOD in the creation, preservation, and redemption of the world, and particularly, in affording us the means of grace on every sabbath day, in order to render us capable of the eternal blessings, so dearly purchased, and promised to such as shall enter into his rest. Draw near, then, with chearful hearts, to the gates of His holy temple, and enter into His courts with praise. Let no part of the service, there to be performed, be treated with indifference and contempt; turn not away from the blessing offered you in the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; devote a reasonable

reasonable portion of the day to innocent and temperate festivity ; but suffer nothing to interfere with your attendance on both morning and evening prayer : the sabbath day is never kept holy, when either of these services is carelessly neglected. Let serious meditations on what has been heard or read employ your evening thoughts. Such of you as have families will do well to dedicate a portion of time to the instruction of your children and your servants ; and I dare promise you, from a sabbath so employed, more real comfort and satisfaction, than any other mode of spending it can possibly afford. You will be well prepared to meet the occurrences and discharge the duties of your several stations in the following week. You will find yourselves more ready to receive the dispensations of Providence in a proper manner, and to improve them to the best advantage ; if prosperous, to enjoy his blessings with moderation ; if adverse, to endure his wholesome corrections with patience and with fortitude. In a word, you will, by the due observance of this holy day, be disposed and enabled so to pass through things temporal, as not finally to lose the things which are eternal. Your sabbath spent in the services of piety on earth, will be a prelude and an introduction to  
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that eternal sabbath, which shall be the portion of the children of GOD in his kingdom of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our LORD :

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour, glory, and praise, world without end. Amen.

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EXODUS xx. 12.

*Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.*

THE two Tables of the Law, containing the sum and substance of our duty to GOD, our neighbour, and ourselves, are not equally divided in number. For, on the *first*, only those four Commandments were inscribed, which set forth the duty that we owe to GOD, whilst in the remaining six, are comprehended the duties which are required of us, as members of society, and candidates for the glories of heaven.

The *Fifth* Commandment, which we are now about to consider and explain, contains a  
 much

much greater extent of duty, than the terms made use of appear immediately to prescribe. The words FATHER and MOTHER, not being limited to our NATURAL Parents, but including other relative connections, and injoining other duties of the utmost importance to our *temporal* comfort, our *spiritual* improvement, and our *eternal* happiness.

In this enlarged interpretation of the word *Father*, we consider the *King*, whom we are required to honour and obey, as the *Father* of his *subjects*; engaged by every solemn obligation of duty and conscience to exercise that authority, with which he is invested by HIM, "through whom Kings reign," with parental affection, and a constant attention to the happiness of his people. In the term *Mother*, the Christian comprehends, in an enlarged and spiritual sense, the *Church*, of which he endeavours to approve himself a faithful Son, and to whose ordinances he uniformly strives to shew a *filial* obedience. It was well observed by an ancient writer, that "he cannot be said to honour GOD as his *Father*, who does not reverence the *Church* as his *Mother*:" by which we are far from meaning a blind and unreasonable attachment to any rites, ceremonies, and injunctions

tions imposed by the Church, and not established by, or in all respects agreeable to, the Word of God; but a conscientious submission to the authority of the Church in such ordinances, as are evidently derived from the fountain of unerring truth. The Twentieth Article of our Religion hath drawn the line with perfect judgment in this case; where it allows the Church to have power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith: but yet it declares, that it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's written word; nor so to expound one part of Scripture, as to render it repugnant to another. It considers the Church as a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ; but as not at liberty, or any way authorized, to decree any thing *against* the same; nor even authorized to enforce any thing *besides* the same, as necessary to be believed in order to salvation.

In that part of our Catechism, in which our duty towards our neighbour is considered, the obedience and respect here required to be shewn to our parents, are explained, as due to "all that are set by the King in authority over us; to all our Governors in Church and State;"—"to our Teachers, our Spiritual Pastors, and Masters."



It enjoins an humble reverence for our superiors, as well because it is for the convenience and comfort and good order of the community, that a distinction of stations should be observed, according to the different possessions, rank, attainments, and degrees of men, as because an humble mode of behaviour to such as are best able to help them in their necessity is an instance of the highest prudence in those, whom Providence has placed in a situation of dependence. Let it however never be forgotten by such, as fill the higher departments in society, that though *equality* amongst men is an absurd and impossible idea, yet that, in the sight of God, all men are *equal*, without any respect to outward circumstances; but that a great difference will one day be made, when every man shall be rewarded according to his works. When the sinner, however distinguished by the gifts of fortune, however eminent for his literary attainments, however illustrious his rank, however conspicuous his character, will be only so far recommended to the favour of Him, who is "no respecter of persons," as he has excelled in the knowledge, and fear, and love of God; and in the observance of his Commandments. Let not then the *wise* man glory in his *wisdom*; neither

ther let the *mighty* man *glory* in his *might*; let not the *rich* man *glory* in his *riches*; but let him that *glorieth* *glory* in *this*; that he knoweth and understandeth the LORD; and hath endeavoured, through His gracious assistance, to live in obedience to His will.

The duties which belong to the stations in which we are respectively placed, may be considered as *mutually* binding on all orders and degrees of men. The Commandment, in its obvious and literal sense, is indeed an address to young persons, to love, honour, and assist their natural parents; yet, we all know, that there are duties equally belonging to parents towards their children; and so in every situation of life, the duties are reciprocal from the *King* towards his *Subjects*; and the *Subjects* to their *King*; from the *master* towards his *servant*, and the *servant* towards his *master*; from the *husband* towards his *wife*, and the *wife* towards her *husband*, and so forth: from all, in short, in every station of superiority, towards such as are placed in any of the inferior ranks and orders of society; and from all in a state of inferiority, to those whom the Providence of God hath set over them.

The end of this Commandment is the preservation of harmony and peace in the world; and this can only be effected by the attention of every individual to the duties of his own particular station: and the influence, which this attention has upon the general tranquility, shews, that the religion which we profess, is not less friendly to our happiness on earth, than calculated to secure it in the world to come. On this duty, therefore, which, as subjects, we owe to our Governors in Church and State, considering the words *Father and Mother* in this more enlarged sense, I shall employ the remainder of this discourse. Indeed, if it were otherwise considered, the Commandment would have only a very partial and limited application: The major part of our hearers, whose parents have long since been taken from them, could feel no interest in exhortations to this duty of honouring their parents, in a literal sense; but obedience to Governors, whether to the Sovereign, as the father of his people, or to such as are invested with temporal or spiritual authority, or to the ordinances and institutions of that Church, which, under the character of the Spiritual Jerusalem, is considered as the *Mother of us all*; nourishing and cherishing her children

children with the wholesome food of sound doctrine, and sanctifying, refreshing, and strengthening their souls by her holy Sacraments—to these, I say, Obedience is a duty *universally* required, and for which we shall *all* be accountable at the last day.

The importance of this duty in the present times, is so obvious, that it is scarcely necessary to point it out to you; an headstrong principle of resistance to lawful authority appears to have involved a large portion of the world in confusion, anarchy, and bloodshed. Happy is it for this highly-privileged country, that it hath been hitherto preserved from being the eye-witness of such calamities; though it has not been without its share in the inconveniences and sorrows, which the neglect of the duty before us, in the sense in which we are now considering it, hath brought upon mankind: slight as our sufferings are, when compared with those of other nations, whose country is the seat of war, they are sufficient to give us a clear notion of the mischievous consequences of disobedience to this Commandment; it leads men to vain and unreasonable attempts to disturb and pervert the established order of things; to assert rights incompatible with every idea of well-

ordered society; to introduce unheard-of principles of universal equality; absurd in theory, and unattainable in practice. Surely, then, never does the Gospel more fully justify its character of being the Gospel of Peace, than when it is found to inculcate that humble, quiet, peaceful disposition, which is so productive of both individual and national comfort, satisfaction and prosperity. A whole volume, written on the subject, could not more exactly describe, than the Apostle St. James has done, in a few words, the different characters of that contentious spirit, which exalts itself above the wisdom even of the Supreme Governor of the Universe; and of that humble, obedient, and tractable spirit, which is the genuine offspring of Christianity: "Who," he asks, "is a wise man, and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts," *envying* against the superiority, in which others are set over you; and a vain and unreasonable *strife* to raise yourselves to a footing of equality, where God hath ordained subordination for mutual comfort—If these are the dispositions of your hearts, "glory not, and lie not against the truth: This wisdom  
 " dom

“ dom descendeth not from above; but is  
 “ earthly, sensual, devilish: For where envying  
 “ and strife is, there is confusion and every evil  
 “ work. But the wisdom that is from above  
 “ is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and  
 “ easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good  
 “ fruits, without partiality (in the margin of  
 “ the Bible it is *without wrangling*) and without  
 “ hypocrisy;” to which the Apostle adds, “ that  
 “ the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace,  
 “ by them that make peace;” whose desire  
 and endeavour it is to exhibit in their character  
 and conduct that spirit, which will bring them  
 to the nearest resemblance of the PRINCE OF  
 PEACE.

Such then is the extent of this duty as pre-  
 scribed by the Fifth Commandment, considered  
 in a larger signification than the terms *Father  
 and Mother* immediately point out to us; and  
 the same may also be said of the blessing pro-  
 mised to the due performance of this duty: the  
 Apostle refers to this, as “ the First Command-  
 ment with promise;” but he no where says, that  
 the blessing contained in the promise is *merely  
 temporal*. The land promised and given to the  
 people of God, was understood by the faith-  
 ful, to be a figure of that better land of pro-  
 mise,

mise, which awaits our acceptance in a future state. And the long enjoyment of it, which an obedience to this Commandment is encouraged to expect, is only, in other words, a promise of eternal bliss, to such as demonstrate the sincerity of their love to God, by their performance of the duty which they owe to each other. In this scale of duties, that which we have been treating of, like the objects to which it refers, has justly the pre-eminence; the same principle which leads to the performance of the duties required by this Commandment, will render us duly observant of all the others, which we owe to our neighbour; it is that grand principle of rendering to all their due; obedience to parents; submission to lawful authority; observance of the commands of our superiors: All which are tokens of that meek and humble spirit, which lays the foundation of peace and comfort in the present state, and prepares us for the enjoyment of those blessings in the land of promise, the heavenly Canaan, which that great pattern of obedience Himself hath purchased for his faithful servants, even Jesus Christ our LORD; In whose celestial kingdom may He be pleased to grant us an inheritance, which shall endure for ever, at his own right hand,

who

who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

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EXODUS xx. 5.

*Thou shalt not kill.*

WHEN it is considered that the "end of all the Commandments is Charity," which is the bond of peace and perfectness; that all the law is comprehended in this one saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," we cannot wonder at the injunction in the text. The sin of *murder* here forbidden, is the most heinous violation of that royal law, on which every obligation of duty towards our neighbour depends. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." If we trace the history of this odious crime to its origin, we shall find that it was one of the first bitter fruits of that sin, which in every sense



of the word brought *death* into the world. The envy of the elder son of fallen Adam produced the horrid murder of his brother *Abel*, and exposed him to all the dreadful effects of the divine displeasure. It became necessary to declare the determined vengeance of heaven against this odious transgression; accordingly it was ordained, that "Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:" The image of God cannot be effaced, and every obligation of humanity and charity be dissolved, without the highest degree of criminal contempt of the will and commands of our Great Creator. He hath ordained, that mutual benevolence and brotherly kindness should distinguish the character of persons endued with a rational mind, and created with a capacity to promote the welfare and happiness of all around them. It would be a very injurious reflection upon the Mosaic dispensation to consider it otherwise than as highly recommendatory of the exercise of good will to mankind. "If *thine* enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink," was as evidently an injunction in the Old, as it was afterwards in the New Testament: "If *thine* enemy's ox or his ass fall into a pit, thou shalt surely help him out; If he fall under his burden,

" den,

“den, thou shalt surely raise him up.” We do not deny, that this duty is still more forcibly enjoined and prescribed in the Gospel by Him, who “came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil” them. Our Saviour observes, that it had been *said*;—not in any part of the Law of God, (for in no part of it is it to be found) “Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy;” this had only been *said* by the false interpreters of it, who accommodated the sense of Scripture to the dictates of their own corrupt minds. The Christian Lawgiver inculcates a very different lesson:—“I say unto you, Love your enemies; Bless them that curse you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you:” And for our encouragement He adds, that this will exalt us to a resemblance of our heavenly Father, whose mercy is over all his works; who maketh his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good; and who sendeth his gracious rain upon the just and unjust. Surely, if you would form an idea of a disposition directly opposite to that which the gospel requires, you would find it in that heart, which is filled with hatred and malice; which is ever employed in meditating mischief to others, and which is only restrained from

open acts of violence and murder by the terror of the laws, and the apprehension of personal sufferings.

How odious the vice here forbidden is in the sight of God, appears, not only from the exemplary vengeance inflicted on the first guilty perpetrator of this crime, on whom a signal mark of the divine displeasure was imprinted, but also from the abhorrence shewn in after-ages to such of his own peculiar people, as had broken this holy Commandment. GOD Almighty tells them that no outward observances, however punctually performed, however constantly persisted in, could be otherwise than hateful in His sight, if they were the services of such as were not pure from this heinous sin. *Bring, saith Jehovah, no more vain oblations; Incense is an abomination to me: the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your solemn Meeting: Your New Moons and your appointed Feasts my soul hateth: They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them; And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not bear: YOUR HANDS ARE FULL OF BLOOD.* "Their feet," He tells them in another place, "ran to evil, and they made haste

to shed innocent blood." No wonder that they knew not the way of peace; that they looked for judgment, but there was none; for salvation, but it was far off from them. No wonder that they felt in their minds that horror, which is inseparable from guilt of every kind, but which is particularly attendant on this species of wickedness. The hand that is defiled with blood, seldom fails to produce dismay and terror in the heart; the laws of God and man rise up with peculiar force against these offenders; they are scared with visions of the night, when the minds of the innocent are at rest; they behold the vengeance of God and man hanging over their heads, and every moment ready to fall upon them. In all histories of the wretched consequences of this crime, we find that it seldomer escapes detection than any other; in some cases, many years are suffered to elapse; and the wretched sinner, who knows that his guilt has not escaped the eye of heaven, flatters himself that he hath at least escaped the discovery of man; and while he thus wraps himself up in a false and ill-founded security, some unforeseen, unthought-of circumstance occurs, which brings the hidden wickedness to light, and exposes the offender to the punishment which

his iniquity deserves, and to the execution of a sentence of more than ordinary severity. To the murderer that assurance more particularly belongs, which Moses urges to the people of God, to discourage them from wilful disobedience: "If ye will not do that which the LORD your God hath commanded you, behold, you will sin against the LORD; and be sure, your sin will find you out."

There is a particular instance, in which this Commandment is wilfully and daringly broken; but to which, in its fatal extent, they for whom these instructions are principally designed, are not likely to be tempted; I mean the horrible practice of *duelling*, one of the many dangerous privileges of superior rank: for the reason just mentioned, because you are not likely to fall into this crime, I shall have no need to enlarge upon it on your account; yet I cannot dismiss the subject, without entering my protest against a practice so directly contrary to the law of God; I am well aware of the difficulties into which conscientious persons may occasionally be drawn on this subject; but sure I am, that in every case where the choice is only between these two things: "Whether we shall observe  
" the law of God, or comply with the sinful  
" customs

“customs of the world,” the determination is obvious; that to obey God is better than to please men at the hazard of offending God; it is no reflection upon any man’s courage, that he is afraid to sin against Him, who is able to destroy both his body and soul eternally: but it is a great instance of a want of real fortitude, when men had rather violate a positive Command of God, than expose themselves to the censures of a sinful world. It was the saying of a very brave person, highly worthy to be recorded, when, having shewn that he declined a single combat, purely from motives of conscience, and a principle of duty, he said, “Place me in the front of the battle; I dare advance to the mouth of a cannon, when my duty calls me to it; but I have not courage to face an angry God.”

I observed that this *delicate* sense of honour, which leads men so frequently to endeavour to destroy each other, is not likely to draw many of those who now hear me, into this extremity of guilt; yet have we great cause to complain of the many instances of outrage and resentment, which even slight provocations are wont to produce in the inferior orders of men:—Whence otherwise come fightings among you? Whence those lawless assemblies, which have been

been too often encouraged by persons in superior ranks of life, and which have sometimes terminated in the breach of this Commandment to its full extent? Where the parties engaged, do not perhaps always meet with malicious resentment rooted in their hearts; but where, in the course of the conflict, every evil passion is excited, and the only choice on either side is, "Victory or Death." Let no man plead, for a single moment, in behalf of a practice, which militates against every precept of the Gospel, and is destructive of every principle of charity: Let us only imagine one of those ferocious combatants, called, as is sometimes the case, from the scene of action to the tribunal of God, with all his revengeful and murderous passions, predominant in his heart; let us consider him as summoned in an instant before that all-righteous Judge, with whom such dispositions only are accepted, as are "gentle, peaceable, and full of mercy." Ah! whither shall he betake himself, or what shall he urge in his defence! The soul, unarrayed with the grace of Charity, (and most destitute of this grace will every such soul be found in that hour) cannot be accepted in the sight of Him, who hath declared, that though

we have all faith, and knowledge, and liberality, and zeal, yet *without Charity we are nothing.*

Abstain then, I beseech you, my Christian Brethren, from the beginnings of strife, knowing that its end is so often destruction: cultivate those eminently Christian virtues of humility, meekness, patience, and forbearance: Remember that "charity suffereth long, and is not easily provoked;" that "love worketh no ill," and much less doth it work destruction "to our neighbour:" Remember, that this Commandment is broken, where no actual murder is committed; but wherever hatred and malice prevail in the heart and affections. *He that hateth his brother is a murderer;* and what follows?—*Ye know, saith the Apostle, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

The time will not permit me to dwell on another horrible breach of this Commandment; when men take upon themselves to dispose of that life, by their own hands, of which they are not proprietors by the gift of heaven; a miserable want of principle renders men unable to stand, when either sudden calamities overtake them, or the reproaches of an evil conscience overwhelm them. In the rashness of impetuous passion they are deaf to the remonstrances

of



of reason, and the law of God. Hence, instead of an humble, fervent application to the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, they foolishly prefer that shorter but most desperate resource, to *curse God and die*. This being a crime which can never be repented of, we have no consolation either to encourage or to offer, but by resolving the whole into downright madness, and palliating the sinfulness of the act, by denying the responsibility of the agent.

Upon the whole, let us reflect on the abhorrence which the Divine Lawgiver testified against this crime under the Jewish dispensation, and let us not forget how far the precept is extended in the Gospel; which requires us to love our enemies,—to do good to them that hate us,—to pray for them that despitefully use us;—so shall we be accounted worthy of that Name, which is superior to every the most honourable distinction in this world, we shall be accounted the Children of our Heavenly Father, the Children of HIM, who is the Father of all Mercies, and hath made this the character and token of his disciples, that we love one another. In two short sentences is contained or implied the full sum of our obedience to this law:—

“ Whatsoever

“ Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.”—And, “ If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive yours; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father which is in heaven, forgive your trespasses.”

Now to GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Ghost, &c.

## EXODUS xx. 14.

*Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

SUCH of my hearers as are not properly instructed, will, I apprehend, hear this Commandment recited, without understanding its extent or its importance. It is therefore necessary to inform such, that the word *adultery*, though generally limited to one particular breach of duty, includes in it every instance of intemperance and excess, every unlawful indulgence of the passions, and sinful desires, every irregularity of conduct, to which

*adults,*

*adults*, persons advanced from childhood to youth, are particularly tempted and inclined. I am well aware of the difficulty, which attends an explanation of this subject; and I would wish as carefully to avoid every thing which should offend, in such a discussion, as to palliate or excuse a crime, which strikes at the root of all that is dear and valuable among men; as well as all that is pure and amiable in itself. Surely, there is no instance, wherein the law of God is violated, whereby the happiness of the offending parties, or the peace of injured families, or the general good order of society, is more effectually disturbed and destroyed.

The sin, of which we are speaking, divides itself into a variety of parts, and makes its appearance in a multiplicity of hideous forms. Of a few of them we will venture to speak, reminding you at the same time, that whatever is contrary to that purity of heart, that holiness, without which no man can see God, is a transgression of this Commandment.

The first and grossest instance of disobedience to this divine law, is the violation of the sacred bond of marriage; when either the husband or the wife acts in defiance of that most solemn engagement, by which both are bound

to abstain from every other attachment, and remain constant to each other, so long as both parties shall live.

This is the first, plainest, and most obvious interpretation of the word *adultery*, and involves in it such a train of evils, such a complication of mischief, that it cannot be looked at without a mixture of pity and abhorrence. It cannot be named amongst Christians, as that which becometh saints, or as other than that which is most disgraceful to the Christian character. We find the name of Honour, and the epithet "honourable," frequently pressed into the service, but we know not the meaning of the word, when it is unsupported by, and still less, when it is acting in defiance of religion.

A second instance, wherein this Commandment is broken, is, when those sinful lusts, which are so properly described as "warring against the soul," are suffered to gain the ascendancy over our reason, over the obligations of duty, over the dictates of a well-informed conscience, and the injunctions of the law of God, betwixt persons of different sexes, unconnected with each other by the bond of matrimony. The term by which this sin is expressed, I need scarcely to tell you is, *fornication*, and as little need I point out to  
you

you the shocking prevalence of this crime. It is considered by multitudes of persons, miserably deluded and depraved, as a very pardonable, if not allowable, indulgence of those natural appetites implanted by the wise Author of our Being for the maintenance of the world; but which it is the business of reason and religion to regulate, to govern; and controul.

Have then such defenders of, such advocates for, this criminal indulgence been able to discover no difference between persons endued with a rational mind, and brutes which have no understanding? Do they imagine, that neither the restraints of reason nor of religion are required, to establish the distinction between the mere animal of the earth, and the candidate for heaven, the heir of immortality? Does the seducer, the betrayer of female innocence, see no guilt in beguiling incautious youth, in withdrawing a frail fellow-creature in an unguarded moment from her duty to God, her parents, and herself? Does he feel no remorse in covering the grey hairs of the afflicted parents with shame and sorrow, and reducing the wretched victim of his passion to the lowest state of infamy and dishonour? Does he foresee none of the evil consequences of ruining a frail mortal,

mortal, created and designed, and formed to be a blessing and comfort to some virtuous associate, in a holy, pure, and honourable state; and rendering her a most disgraceful, pestilential, and abandoned member of the community? Or, supposing him not actually to have seduced from the path of virtue the object of his unlawful passions, does he see no guilt in confirming, supporting, and encouraging one already fallen, in her guilty course of disobedience? Is he not aware, that if an especial reward is promised to such as shall be instrumental in converting a sinner from the error of his ways, a proportionable degree of guilt and punishment must be attached to those, that harden transgressors in the practice of iniquity? Surely under all the circumstances of the case, this sin, which men account so venial, so excusable, so trifling, so allowable, involves in it so much personal impurity, so much domestic sorrow, such inevitable misery and ruin to one party, and such indelible dishonour to the other; it is, in short, so odious in the sight of a God of infinite holiness; and so unjustifiable in the eyes of every decent, worthy member of society, that we cannot too forcibly apply the Apostle's advice, to *flee fornication*; enforcing our admonition

nition with this assurance, that *whoremongers and adulterers* God will judge: Not judge them in the ordinary sense of the word; for we must *all* be judged; but will assuredly *condemn* them without a sincere and unfeigned repentance. There are other instances in which this Commandment is grievously transgressed; I do not speak, I hardly dare allow myself to think of, that crime, which drew down the judgments of heaven upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. This was a token of such uncommon and such deplorable depravity and corruption of heart, and mind, and morals, as is not only marked with the vengeance of heaven, but renders the offender liable to the utmost severity of human laws: the sentence of death follows this odious offence, proved in a court of judicature; and that shower of fire and brimstone, which the LORD sent down from heaven upon the land, was a just representation of the nature of that punishment, which awaits this sin in the world to come.

But there are other offences which do not seem immediately within the scope and meaning of this Commandment, and yet come fairly within the reach of the prohibition, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*: I have already observed to

you,

you, that under this term are comprized all those excesses, by whatever name they are distinguished, into which adults or young persons are particularly liable to run: all intemperance of every kind is a direct violation of this precept; and if there were no other admonition to abstain from drunkenness, its being a breach of this Seventh Commandment is sufficient to deter us from this disgraceful vice; a vice which throws down the distinction betwixt a rational and an irrational creature, and debases the fairest work of GOD to a level with the beasts that perish. Read attentively Solomon's description of the effects of intemperance on the mind and body, as given you near the conclusion of the 23d chapter of the Book of Proverbs; and all dissuasives from the vice of drunkenness will after that be unnecessary.— There you will find it is the parent of "woe and sorrow," of "babbling and contentions," of "redness of eyes," and of "wounds without cause:" that it leads to those other breaches of this law of which we have already spoken, by throwing reason off her guard, and depriving us of the use of the best preservatives of our innocence, the power of reflection, and a recourse to the instructions of the Word of GOD. "Thine eyes," saith Solomon,

Solomon,



Solomon, " shall behold strange women ; and  
 " thine heart shall utter perverse and foolish  
 " things." There being no sin into which the  
 drunkard may not be drawn, who is easily led  
 captive by Satan at his will.

There are some breaches of this Command-  
 ment of inferior malignity, yet leading to the  
 worst of consequences; as they originate from  
 a depravity of heart, which only waits for op-  
 portunity, and perhaps for secrecy, in order to  
 run into the full excess of riot and debauchery ;  
 as though the eyes of the LORD were not in  
 every place, " ten thousand times 'brighter than  
 the sun, beholding all the ways of the children  
 of men," so that " there is no darkness nor shadow  
 of death, where the workers of iniquity may  
 hide themselves." I am speaking of foolish  
 talking, filthy jesting, and wanton imaginations  
 wilfully indulged ; all these are preliminaries of  
 the crime, which we are here required to avoid,  
 as we would the face of a deadly serpent. The  
 same inspired author, to whom we have just now  
 referred for the portrait of a drunkard, gives us  
 as lively a picture of him, who is falsely called the  
 man of pleasure, following his sinful appetites to  
 his own destruction. Having described the al-  
 luring artifices of the harlot, by which she has  
 overcome

overcome the faint resolutions of incautious youth : He tells us, “ He goeth after her straight-  
 “ way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a  
 “ fool to the correction of the stocks ; as a bird  
 “ hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it  
 “ is for his life.” Then it is, that we hear him  
 lamenting the wretchedness of his condition, when  
 his flesh and his body are consumed, and saying,  
 “ How have I hated instruction, how hath my  
 “ heart despised reproof ? I have not obeyed the  
 “ voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to  
 “ them that instructed me. I have been almost  
 “ in all evil, in the midst of the assembly of  
 “ wicked doers.” Thus is the remembrance of  
 sin proved to be a thousand times more dread-  
 ful than ever the act of sin was pleasant : and if  
 this were not the case, there is another confi-  
 deration still remaining, and a future great and  
 awful event, to which Solomon directs the at-  
 tention of his *Man of Pleasure* :—“ Rejoice, O  
 “ young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart  
 “ cheer thee in the days of thine youth ; and  
 “ walk thou in the ways of thine heart, and  
 “ after the sight of thine eyes ; but know thou,  
 “ that for all these things God will bring thee  
 “ into Judgment.”

To this point I would wish to carry the mind of the sons and daughters of pleasure, as they are falsely esteemed and called; because I am sure their conduct, when a future day of account is brought into their view, will appear as irrational as it is unholy: They will ask this important question—“*What shall it profit me, if I indulge myself in a momentary gratification at the peril of my soul?*” And, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD?”

Having shewn the greatness of the evil, it now becomes my duty briefly to prescribe the remedy. And the first mean of securing yourselves is certainly constant, daily prayer; which whoever neglects, lays himself open to every assault of the devil, the world, and the flesh. —The next is, to set GOD always before you, and consider yourselves as always in his presence: The eye of an all-righteous Being, who not only abhors impurity, but is able to punish it in time and eternity, that eye pervades the most secret counsels of the workers of ungodliness, and His arm will punish their offences with the rod, and their sins with scourges: He hath marked the sin of which we are speaking with peculiar tokens of displeasure; as they whose  
 flesh

flesh is consumed, whose countenance is deformed, and whose constitution is utterly destroyed by this vice, are very ready to acknowledge.—The last mean which I shall mention, is, habitual temperance and purity in your ordinary course of life, and a strict regulation of your ordinary conversation. Remember, that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; not a corrupt tree good fruit;” restrain your appetites in things lawful, and they will not gain the ascendancy over you in those which are forbidden. The glutton and the wine-bibber is an easy sacrifice to every temptation that is thrown in his way. The duties of a Christian are united by a tie that never can or ought to be dissolved, when he is required to live *righteously* with respect to men, *godly* with respect to his Maker, and *soberly* with respect to himself in this present world.

Such an universal regard to the heart, and life, and conduct, will secure our peace and comfort in this world, and open to us a prospect of never-failing delight in the presence of God, with whom, through the merits of our Redeemer, we shall experience the fulness of joy;

and pure uninterrupted pleasures for evermore. Which GOD of his infinite mercy grant, through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

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## EXODUS xx. 15.

*Thou shalt not Steal.*

WHEN the Gospel requires, as an indispensable duty, of every Christian, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live *soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world, it really sets before us the sum and substance of the Ten Commandments in those three words: For the first includes the duty which we owe to *ourselves*; the second, that which we owe to our *neighbour*; and the third, our duty towards GOD. The four first, which are the Commandments of the first table, comprehend the duties which we owe to GOD, of faith, love, reverence of His holy Name, and Day: The *Fifth, Sixth, and the Eighth*, (now under consideration) and the *Ninth*, more immediately respect the duty which we owe to our neighbour, respecting his person, his property, and his reputation;

tation ; whilst the *Seventh* and the *Tenth* relate more particularly to the government of ourselves, the due restraint of those corrupt affections, which lead men to instances of open violation of the laws of GOD. One of these we considered with more than ordinary attention in our last discourse on the *Seventh* Commandment.

The shocking prevalence of those vices which are committed in defiance of that part of the Divine Law, made it necessary to dwell more largely and particularly upon it, because by many, even the most daring and outrageous breaches of the *Seventh* Commandment are considered as pardonable frailties at the worst, and by some even as allowable : while the less enormous violations of it are deemed scarcely any offence at all against the purity of the Divine Law, against the happiness of domestic, or the good order and decorum of civil society. Such profligate sentiments and conduct cannot be too loudly protested against ; we cannot too earnestly implore it, as one of GOD's most gracious gifts, that he would be pleased to create in us a pure heart, and renew a right spirit within us.—This *Eighth* Commandment leads us to consider the nature of that offence, which is di-

rected more immediately against the *property* of our neighbour.

GOD, in His all-wise disposal and government of the world, hath ordained, that nothing like *equality* should prevail in it: *That* foolish device was left for the vain philosophy of those who fancy themselves wiser than the Supreme Director of all Things in heaven and earth.— On the contrary, he ordained, that “the poor should never cease out of the land:” that an opportunity never might be wanting for the exercise of that truly Christian grace, the virtue of charity, on the part of the rich; nor of that other eminent grace, a patient resignation to the will of heaven, on the part of the poor. But alas! whilst the rich are tempted by prosperity to fancy themselves independent on their Creator and Preserver, and in the foolishness of their imagination to ask, “Who is the LORD?” The poor are tempted by adversity and distress to acts of fraud and dishonesty, and to *take the Name of their GOD in vain*; that is, to conduct themselves as persons that know not GOD, and like them who profess not to be called by his Name. Uninfluenced by principles of common honesty in their dealings; eager and intent upon either open and violent attacks to  
 spoil

spoil and plunder, or secret and artful devices to over-reach and defraud their neighbours.— Various are the instances in which men allow themselves to depart from the obligations of this Commandment; the neglect of which leads to vices of the most destructive nature; destructive of health, time, property, reputation, and whatever is most desirable to be enjoyed or preserved. To what other purpose tend the hours consumed over a gaming-table, of which we shall have more to say in our observations on the *Tenth* Commandment, at which every art is practised whereby our neighbour may be defrauded and injured even to his utter ruin! To what destructive consequences does that conduct lead, which induces men to commit every outrage against the peace and safety of their neighbours, even at the hazard of their lives, for the sake of those supplies, which might be more easily obtained by honest industry; and much more satisfactorily enjoyed? The sin of which we are speaking, is seldom found to be a *single* vice; it is too frequently the offspring of extravagance; of a wilful abuse of God's blessings, by which men reduce themselves to the necessity of using indirect and dishonest means to amend their situation, improve their circumstances, and repair



their shattered fortunes: Men are seldom tempted by downright necessity to the violation of this law; whenever such instances do *really* occur, our humanity is called upon to shew itself in as favourable an interpretation of the laws as can with any safety be admitted; but offenders generally break this Commandment, to enable them to persist in the breach of others: they first ruin themselves by vicious and expensive *pleasures*, as they are improperly called, and then have recourse to those instances of fraud, or rapine, which this Commandment so positively forbids, that they may consume what is so unjustly acquired, in the gratification of their sinful appetites.

There are also other instances, wherein this law is transgressed, where the strict rule of justice is not observed in men's dealings with each other. When once an evil spirit of covetousness has taken possession of the heart, there is no act of dishonesty to which it will not descend for the gratification of its prevailing passion; there are no boundaries over which it will refuse to leap, in order to the attainment of its wishes: horrible instances, even of murder, have frequently presented themselves, which was committed for the purpose of gratifying this thirst  
of

of gain. But we are here speaking only of the low artifices of fraud and dishonesty in men's daily intercourse and traffick with one another; wherein truth and integrity, virtue and a good conscience, are all sacrificed, for the purpose of over-reaching our neighbour, and adding dear-bought riches to our possessions. Hence arise the false balance, the unjust weight, and the scanty measure, which is abominable: hence arise all those injurious practices, whereby men scruple not to grind the faces of the poor, by acts of fraud in the quantity, the quality, and the price of the necessary accommodations of life. Such persons scarcely need be told, that "a false balance is an abomination to the LORD," but that a "just weight is His delight." Let these transgressors remember, that as their actions are observed by an all-seeing eye, so will they one day be weighed in an all-righteous balance, in the scale of infallible unerring justice, when every man shall be recompensed according to his works; and with such measure as they have meted with, it shall be measured to them again. And if to have refused to shew *mercy* to the poor, will in that day be accounted a grievous violation of the law of charity, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought guilty,

who hath refused to shew him common justice ; who hath aggravated the miseries of poverty, by withholding from it its due, and instead of alleviating, by adding to its sorrows ? There are not indeed those circumstances of terror, and personal danger connected with this mode of breaking the *Eighth* Commandment, which are found in cases of violent robbery, by outward threats, or in those of nightly plunder and depredation by armed force ; but this daily and hourly fraud works like a secret poison, by slow and imperceptible degrees, to the great injury, if not the ruin, of those, towards whom it is practised, and to the shame and misery of those, who seem to have utterly forgotten that striking question of our Saviour : “ *What would it profit a man, if he could gain the whole world, to the loss of his own soul, and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* ” These ordinary acts of deceitful commerce do not perhaps so forcibly strike the mind, because they are not accompanied with circumstances of personal violence ; but their iniquity is still the same, and every departure from that sacred law, which includes the whole of our duty towards our neighbour, and requires us to *do unto all men as we would they should do unto us*, is in the highest degree offensive

offensive to a most just GOD, who cannot behold iniquity without abhorrence. He looketh down from his sanctuary, and beholdeth all the ways of the children of men; and let such transgressors of the law, by the observance of which we should make the nearest approach towards one of the great perfections of the Deity; let such transgressors be assured, that there is no darkness or shadow of death, wherein the worker of iniquity can hide himself: let the fraudulent of every species view each his own picture in the contrast which is drawn of a directly opposite character, by David, in the 112th Psalm:—*Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, and delighteth greatly in his Commandments:* We dare not promise this blessing to the unrighteous, living in the continual breach of such Commandments. *His seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed:* But can we hope, that the unjust can transmit their ill-gotten property with a blessing to their posterity? *Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever:* Wealth and riches may be in the house of the wicked; but instead of the latter part of the Psalmist's blessing, what saith St. James? "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for

“ the miseries which shall come upon you. Your  
 “ gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of  
 “ them shall be a witness against you.—*A good*  
 “ *man is merciful, disperseth abroad, and giveth to*  
 “ *the poor ; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*  
 “ The merciless unjust defraudeth the poor:  
 “ His sun shall set in obscurity and thick dark-  
 “ ness: He shall behold the reward of the  
 “ righteous, and it shall grieve him: he shall  
 “ gnash with his teeth, and pine away with  
 “ envy:” his eager, but ill-directed desire of  
 happiness shall be disappointed, and perish.

Let us constantly bear in our minds, that a  
 man's ways are before the LORD, and that he  
 pondereth all our doings. Let us remember,  
 that all our most secret transactions are naked  
 and open to Him with whom we have to do ;  
 and that the righteous LORD loveth righteous-  
 ness ; His countenance will behold, His mercy  
 will accept, His justice will recompense the  
 uprightness of those that have dealt honestly  
 and justly with others, in that hour, wherein it  
 shall be found that, through the all-sufficient  
 merits of the all-righteous Saviour of the  
 world, “ In the way of righteousness is life  
 “ eternal, and in the path-way thereof there is  
 “ no death.”—Now to GOD the Father, &c.

## EXODUS xx. 16.

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour.*

WHEN we consider the immediate influence which the observance or the breach of this Commandment hath on the peace and comfort as well as the safety of human society, we cannot but acknowledge its great importance in the scale of our religious duties. For to what source can we trace more properly that discord and that misery, which are so prevalent in the world, than to that evil spirit of rancour and malice, which the precept before us is so immediately designed to prevent or to extinguish?

We are expressly told, that "all our doings without charity are nothing worth;" and I need hardly observe to you in what utter defiance of all the obligations of charity, is every transgression of this *Ninth* Commandment.

My business is to shew into what particular branches the breach of it is divided.—Ist, then, we violate this law, whenever we raise an evil report,

report, on unjust grounds, against our neighbour, whereby his good name, his interest, or his property may be any way injured or endangered: you will here observe, how immediately this offence is contradictory to that royal law of "doing unto all men as we would they should do unto us:" I scarcely need ask any one of my hearers, whether there is any injury which he more sensibly feels, than that by which his reputation is affected. The difficulties of poverty he labours to surmount, by honest industry; the loss of property he submits to, as one of the unavoidable accidents of human life; but to be deprived of his good name, the poor man's treasure, and oftentimes his greatest, if not almost his only, comfort—this is a loss to which he cannot easily be reconciled; an injury, to which he can never be indifferent, however it may be, as it certainly is, his duty to forgive it.

But though *he that uttereth a slander is a fool*, expressly so declared by Solomon, and a fool in that particular sense, in which the wicked are most properly distinguished by that name, yet there is another degree of folly and depravity not much inferior to this, of which they are guilty, who encourage the slanderer, by more than

than a patient hearing, by an eager attention to, and an evident approbation of, his discourse.— Such persons do surely partake largely of the guilt of those, who wilfully defame the innocent and virtuous; either desirous, through envy, to bring down superior merit to the ordinary standard, or through malice, secretly to undermine what they cannot openly destroy: our duty certainly is not to fan those sparks of uncharitable censure, which, being encouraged, would advance into a devouring flame, destructive to the character of our neighbour; but by silence, and apparent dislike of such malevolent conversation, to extinguish them: thus reminding such as are regardless of the precept before us, how little they possess of that principal grace of Christianity, which “thinketh no evil,” and consequently “worketh no ill to its neighbour;” and is therefore said to be the accomplishment of the law, so far as the duties of the second table are concerned.

Another, and that a still more heinous offence against this Commandment is, when any person, induced by malice, undue partiality, false notions of friendship, wanton profaneness, and contempt of the divine authority of a God of infinite truth and holiness, presumes to con-  
firm



firm a known falsehood by an oath in a Court of Justice. The infamy attached to this crime by the sentence of our laws, and the general abhorrence in which it is holden by all good men, one should imagine would be sufficient of itself to discountenance this odious and most mischievous sin. But alas! its frequency is such, as to be a just ground of alarm to every ferious reflecting mind; it is considered as one of those daring provocations, which most endanger the public safety, by drawing down the indignation of heaven not only on the offending individual, but on the nation wherein iniquity of such more than ordinary malignity abounds: "Because of swearing," saith the prophet Jeremiah, "the land mourneth:" And it is no wonder that any country, kingdom, or nation, should experience the severity of the divine displeasure, whose profaneness sets at nought in one act the wisdom, the righteousness, and the power of God; that wisdom which discerns, that righteousness which abhors, and that power which is able eternally to punish such presumption and impiety. But so far as it is an high crime and misdemeanor against the Majesty of Heaven, we have had occasion to consider the sin of perjury in our observations on the *Third*  
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Commandment. It is here more particularly our business to consider its evil tendency, as it respects our neighbour; whose dearest possessions, character, property, and even life itself are not a moment secure, if they are liable to be invaded by those with whom the sanction of an oath has no weight, or force, or obligation. With such, every bond of society is broken, and the wall of partition is thrown down, whereby right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil, are by the All-wise Governor of the World separated from each other.

Another breach of this law is observable in those, that with different degrees of criminality depart from truth in their ordinary conversation: We are not here speaking of the malevolence of positive slander, but of that idle and wicked abuse of speech, which is employed in wilful misrepresentation of real facts, at the bottom of which too frequently lurks a certain degree of malignity, which highly aggravates the guilt of every departure from truth.

The same authority, by which we are enjoined not to speak evil of one another, requires us also *not to lie one to another*, but to speak every man truth to his neighbour: and a portion in that lake of fire and brimstone reserved for  
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the ungodly and impenitent is especially assigned to *liars*. It is considered as an unpardonable instance of corruption, when they whose duty it is to resemble, as far as their nature will permit, the perfections of the Deity, do so far debase themselves, as to imitate the father of lies, both in name and nature: The literal interpretation of the title, by which he is distinguished, viz. the Devil and Satan, is, a slanderer, and an accuser; full of hatred and malice, and every species of uncharitableness. He is stiled, in the Book of Revelation, *the accuser of the Brethren*; his office being first to tempt frail mortals to disobedience, and then to accuse them before the throne of the Majesty of God.

These are the several instances in which this Commandment is broken, oftentimes to the great dishonour of God, and to the great injury of our neighbour, and always to the interruption, if not the utter destruction, of that peace on earth, and that good-will amongst men, which it is the principal design of the Gospel to establish in the world.

It becomes our duty to consider now, in the last place, how we may best be preserved from the violation of this divine precept:—

Our

Our first and greatest security seems to be, to remember that awful declaration of our Saviour, that "of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account in the day of judgment;" that "by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned." Now, surely nothing can come so fully within the description of *idle words*, as those which are calculated to do mischief, and to disturb the peace of society; they are idle indeed, but they are something worse; and what says the Psalmist of such offenders?—"Thy tongue deviseth wickedness; with lies thou cuttest like a sharp razor: Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness: Thou hast loved to speak all words that may do hurt, O thou false tongue; therefore shall God destroy thee for ever, and root thee out of the land of the living." The severity of the punishment annexed to this crime, shews its hatefulness in the sight of God, and demands our utmost attention to a due regulation of our speech: which according to his use or abuse of it, is man's highest ornament, or the basest instrument of mischief and dishonour.

It will also be of great use to restrain us from this great offence, if we remember that there is

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not a word in our tongues, but Thou, O LORD, knowest it altogether : Thou knowest that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ; and that, if we would be careful that prudence and charity should direct our discourse, we must take care that they first take up their residence in our hearts. Let us accustom ourselves to think charitably of our neighbours, to put the most favourable construction upon their conduct, to make every reasonable allowance for their frailties ; where we cannot approve, to palliate ; and endeavour to alleviate, what we are not able to justify. Let us remember the great outline of our duty, “ to love our neighbour as ourselves ; ” and we shall then be as tender of his reputation as our own. Let us remember, that the *Witness* of our words will one day be their *Judge* : and we shall then be careful, that our *conversation* (in the first and most obvious acceptation of the word) may be such as *becometh the Gospel of Christ*. Our language will then be for purity, the resemblance of that of an angel ; and for truth, as the oracles of God ; for charity, it will be the natural effusion of loving-kindness and benevolence ; and for edification, it will be such as may minister grace to the hearers : our tongues will be exercised in wisdom,

wisdom, and holiness, and truth upon earth, as preparatory to their full employment in acts of praise and thanksgiving, in an universal chorus of angels and blessed spirits, in the kingdom of heaven.—Now to God the Father, &c.

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EXODUS xx 17.

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house : Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife : nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

AMONG the various duties which Christianity prescribes, some have relation to the due regulation of the *tongue*, some to that of the *hands*, and others to that of the *heart*; indeed, what is uttered from the lips, or is performed by the hands, is principally influenced by the suggestions of the heart; and therefore are we commanded “to keep it with all diligence, since out of it are the issues of life” and death.

Out

Out of the heart proceed not only evil thoughts, but also those evil acts which defile and destroy the man. Cleanse therefore the source, and the streams which flow from it, and diffuse themselves through every part of our conduct will be pure also. But who can say, I have made, or can make, my heart clean? It must be His act, who originally made it pure, till the sinful inventions of men corrupted its integrity. To Him, therefore, must our prayers be addressed, that He would be pleased to renew a right spirit within us.

This last Commandment of the second table of the law points immediately to a due regulation of the desires of our hearts. In terms most explicit it forbids that covetousness, of which our Saviour, in terms peculiarly forcible and emphatical, admonishes us to *take heed and beware*. The very nature of the admonition implies, that we are in more than ordinary danger of being seduced by this evil spirit; and the sins to which it leads are such, as are destructive of our present comfort, and ruinous to our future hopes. In the first place, the sin against which we are here warned, is marked with the blackest character of any in the whole of this second table of the Commandments. Beware of  
covetousness,

covetousness, which is "IDOLATRY." A manifest transfer of the affections from the Creator to the creature ; a casting off that confidence in the Great Creator and Governor of the World, which is both the duty and the happiness of man, and misplacing it on the weak, corruptible, and unsatisfactory possessions of the world, which have neither stability, nor power to protect ; which are most fugitive in their nature, which make themselves wings and flee away : secondly, the sin, against which this Commandment is designed to guard us, is the parent of envy ; than which no other disposition of mind is more destructive to our peace. He, in whom this spirit of covetousness prevaleth, lusteth to envy ; he looks with an invidious eye on any superiority of station or possessions, to which his mind perhaps very unreasonably aspires ; and insensible of the many comforts with which he is surrounded, he looks only with an anxious eye towards such as he is unable to attain. It has pleased God, in His infinitely wise disposal of earthly things, to assign to his creatures different portions of worldly blessings ; different situations, to which different duties are annexed. The idea of equality, not to be found among the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, the  
beasts



beasts of the field, nor even among the stars of heaven, wherein one star differeth from another star in glory, was left for unreasonable man to adopt and defend, to the promotion of strife and confusion, and every evil work. It makes no part of the counsels of eternal wisdom: From the lowest shrub in the wilderness to the venerable oak in the forest; and from the least considerable of the lights of heaven to the most glorious Fountain of Light, to which all nature is indebted, under the blessing of its Great Creator, for support, the idea of equality is utterly excluded. Man, therefore, placed in the situation which Divine Providence hath assigned him in this world, hath only to consider the purposes for which he is so placed, the duties which belong to his station; and the best means whereby he may be enabled to fulfil those duties to his present comfort and his future happiness. And he will soon find, that the Apostle was no stranger to the true nature of human happiness, when he declared, that *godliness, with contentment, is great gain.* This it is which strikes at the root of that vice, against which the Commandment before us is levelled. He that hath a mind contented with his condition, and *therefore* contented with it, *because* he is persuaded that

that

that himself and his concerns are in the hands of GOD, is superior to the ordinary changes and chances of this mortal life ; and has no temptation to look with an envious eye on the privileges, possessions, or endowments of those who appear to move in a sphere of superior eminence and advantage to himself. " This," he may be supposed to say, " this is the path assigned me by my Creator ; in which I am not only permitted, but required to advance, by honest industry, and a faithful discharge of the duties incumbent upon me. But nothing is to tempt me, by any indirect, dishonest or fraudulent means, to deviate from that course which, as a faithful servant of CHRIST, it is my duty to pursue."

*Woe, saith the Prophet, to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high : who enlargeth his desire as the grave, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied : Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his ; not his own, but entrusted to his management, as a steward of the Great Proprietor of the Universe ; so transient in its nature, that its owner can scarcely be ascertained : Woe to him that ladeth himself with thick clay : Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, and hast sinned against thy own soul. Habbak. ii.*

A third evil, against which this Commandment is intended to guard us, is that voluntary penury and want of all things, to which an evil spirit of covetousness so frequently exposes its deluded votary. I need not bring to your minds the various instances of extreme wretchedness, into which such as are deeply infected with this vice have been known to plunge themselves, dragging on a life of misery worse than death. Such stories are related of the effects of avarice, as would be ridiculous in the extreme, if they could be recited without horror. We cannot but grievously lament, that ever a rational mind should be so debased; that ever the affections should be so wretchedly seduced; that ever what was intended to mankind for a blessing should be perverted into a curse; and that which was designed as larger means of doing good, should be abused into an occasion of misery and destruction. O! could you trace the miseries, which embitter every moment of the life of this deluded worshipper of his worthless idol! What entire mistrust of his fellow-creatures! What fearful apprehensions where there is no ground for fear! His days are consumed in suspicion; his flesh is dried up for want of necessary sustenance; his nights are  
 passed

passed either in sleepless terrors, or, if sleep should overtake him, in horrible visions of plunderers and assassins! He knows but of *one* gratification, that of counting over his useless hoard; and even this affords him more terror than satisfaction. He is fearful of being apprehended in the very fact, of enumerating those treasures, which he hath so repeatedly denied that he possesses. He lives an object of universal contempt; which may, perhaps, be changed into pity with those, who consider such irrational conduct, as the effect of downright insanity. Such wretches as these, are living examples of the truth of our Saviour's declaration, that we *cannot serve God and mammon*. Matt. vi. 34. They are strangers to every principle of religious duty; their hearts are steeled against every impression of humanity; their ears are deaf to all the importunity of adversity; their hands are closed against every instance of liberality and charity. We cannot better address such miserably deluded persons than in the spirited language of St. James: *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness*

F 2

*against*

against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure (a treasure of wrath) against the last day; the cries of those whom ye have defrauded are entered into the ears of the LORD of Sabaoth. James v. 1, 2, &c.

In the Exposition of the *Eighth* Commandment I adverted to the unwarrantable practices of the gaming-table, which certainly originate from an evil spirit of covetousness, and are pursued in a direct defiance of this law: By prescription, the practice of *gaming* hath obtained the name and character of *amusement, diversion, recreation, play*. It is impossible to invent a more gross misnomer, than either of these, as applied to this most pernicious practice; by which every passion is excited, that can disturb, disquiet, torment, and even consume and destroy, the spirit of man. There is not a malignant passion incident to corrupt nature, which this bewitching habit hath not a direct tendency to excite and encourage: envy, hatred, covetousness, impatience, unbridled rage, unbounded profaneness, and even blood-thirsty revenge, are the concomitants of gamesters. The rear of this odious assemblage of vicious affections is brought up by horrible despair; and the whole scene is too frequently terminated in  
untimely

untimely death, either from the sacrifice of health, or from the last stroke of *suicide*.—But I had much rather present my readers with that animated description of this (falsely-named) *amusement*, which may be found in one of the Discourses of an eminent Prelate, whose addresses to the public find their way to the hearts of his hearers in a very peculiar manner; and are, at this moment\*, it is hoped, productive of the greatest benefit to most numerous and crowded assemblages of all ranks and descriptions of hearers.—“ Speaking of this DIVERSION (as it  
 “ called) he declares it to be something far dif-  
 “ ferent from the common run of amusements;  
 “ it has no foundation in our natural appetites;  
 “ no charms to captivate the fancy or the un-  
 “ derstanding; nothing to make glad the heart  
 “ of man, to give him a cheerful countenance,  
 “ and refresh him after the cares and fatigues  
 “ of duty, but runs counter to reason, sense,

\* This was written at the time, when the Lord Bishop of London was delivering his eloquent, captivating, and edifying Lenten Discourses, in St. James’s parish church; the effects of which, it is earnestly hoped, will be both extensive and permanent; and we trust will one day be rendered of long and lasting benefit to the Christian church, by being widely circulated from the press.

“ and nature; defeats all the purposes of amuse-  
 “ ment; sinks the spirits instead of raising them;  
 “ sours the temper instead of improving it; and  
 “ when it is carried to its utmost length, takes  
 “ such entire and absolute possession of the soul,  
 “ as to shut out every other concern both for  
 “ GOD and man; extinguishes every generous  
 “ sentiment; excites the most malignant pas-  
 “ sions; provokes to the most profane expres-  
 “ sions; brings distress, sometimes ruin, upon  
 “ its wretched votaries, their families, friends,  
 “ and dependents; tempts them to use unfair, or  
 “ mean, or oppressive methods of retrieving  
 “ their affairs; and sometimes to conclude the  
 “ dismal scene by the last fatal act of despera-  
 “ tion. This surely can never be ranked  
 “ among our innocent amusements. Yet as  
 “ such it is pursued, and has even appropriated  
 “ to itself the name of PLAY; for what reason  
 “ I know not, unless to play with our lives and  
 “ fortunes, with happiness temporal and eter-  
 “ nal, be the most delectable of all human en-  
 “ joyments \*.

We are also well aware, that all the plunder  
 and rapine, which occasion so much mischief and

\* See Bishop Porteus's Sermons, Vol. I. Disc. xiv.

disquiet in the world would be avoided, if the injunctions of this holy Commandment had their proper influence; if men would be induced carefully to watch over the first emotions and desires of the heart. We should then have the satisfaction of seeing every man gratefully receiving, temperately enjoying, and wisely improving the blessings of GOD's gracious Providence: We should behold them, if not exalted to a superior station, contented with an inferior one, and disposed to adorn it by a virtuous contentment, and by exemplary sobriety: Bestowing that little, which the Supreme Disposer of all things enables them to bestow, with a cheerful mind, and with a willing hand, for the relief of such as are in necessity: Not reaching after possessions, which they never were intended to enjoy, and thus losing all relish for those, which the Providence of GOD hath brought within their reach: improving, with pious contentment, the gifts whether of nature, of the world, or of grace, to the glory of Him that gave them; to their own immediate benefit and comfort; and the advantage and happiness of their fellow-creatures: *coveting only the best gifts*; such as will advance their souls in grace and holiness; such as will render them *rich in faith and in good works,*



*works*, and prepare them to become partakers of that incorruptible treasure in Heaven, which faileth not; where every desire of the soul shall be satisfied with that fulness of most pure delight, which the Saviour of the World hath purchased and prepared for all those that manifest their love of GOD by keeping his Commandments.—To which state may GOD, of his infinite mercy, bring us all through a lively faith, productive of holy obedience, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST, our Blessed LORD and Saviour;

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One GOD, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all honour and praise, all glory and dominion, all worship and adoration, world without end. Amen.

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## POSTSCRIPT.

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**HAVING** now, with God's blessing, been enabled to accomplish (however imperfectly) my purpose of giving a Plain, Familiar, and Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments, I have only to commend these, with all my other feeble endeavours, to the merciful goodness of God; beseeching Him, if it be His blessed will, to render them subservient to the great purpose of advancing his glory, and the spiritual and eternal benefit of my fellow Christians; and, whilst with joy and gladness I behold other labourers in the vineyard successfully employing

ploying their superior abilities in works of erudition and profound research, for the defence and propagation of the gospel, and for the furtherance of useful knowledge; I implore His gracious acceptance of these my weak efforts to edify my fellow-Christians at large, in the knowledge of such truths, as may make them wise unto Salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Amen! Amen!



**FINIS.**

